



魔法少女

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JOKERS

育成計画

Magical Girls Project

K! 宝島社

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MAGICAL GIRLS

**PRINCESS
TEMPEST**

To fight the
enemy with
wind power



PRINCESS DELUGE

To fight the enemy
with water power



**PRINCESS
INFERNO**

To fight the
enemy with
fire power



**PRINCESS
QUAKE**

To fight the
enemy with
earth power



PRISM CHERRY

To freely change what's projected in the mirror



MARIKA FUKUROI

To bloom all kinds
of magical flower
on her head



SNOW WHITE

To hear and pinpoint
the voices of
anyone in distress



STYLER MIMI

To adjust the
appearance with
magical coordination



LADY PROUD

To change her blood
into any kinds of liquid



UMBRAIN

To catch everything
with magical umbrella



LITTAKATTA

To make
mysterious bubbles



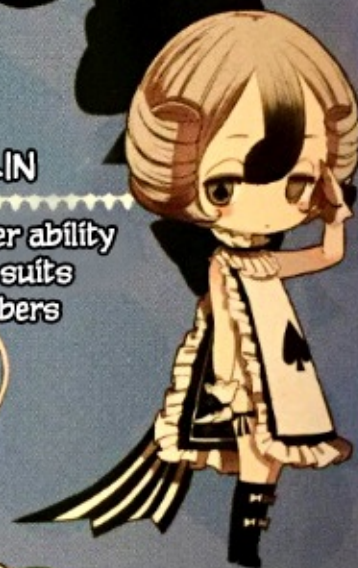
GRIM HEART

To ignore rude
opponents



SHUFFLIN

To change her ability
based on suits
and numbers



FILURU

To sew anything
with magical
needle and thread



KAFURIA

To be able to
see who will die
the earliest



STUNTCHICA

To amaze people with
magical street performance











MAGICAL GIRLS WANTED!

Have you ever wanted to be a Magical Girl? Not just girls, but boys can apply too!

Becoming a Magical Girl used to be so hard! A person must have the right motivations, willpower, character, and heart, to become a real Magical Girl.

Plus, what really determines the factor of your choice is your *Magical Potential*.

Your Magical Potential is how much room for growth you have, at least in terms of magic! Your powers as a Magical Girl grow faster the more potential you have!

It's easy to find Magical Girl candidates among children, all the way up till the age of 20 or so.

But what about the ones older than that? Only a few Magical Girls over the age of 30 become Magical Girls, and fewer still after 40 plus!

What if you have the right traits but have low Magical Potential? What's to do then?

Mascots always try to find candidates with high Magical Potential, but that's just not fair, is it? What about people with no potential who *want* to be a Magical Girl?

Well, luckily, we live in an age where technology always advances!

For the first time ever, *anyone* can be a Magical Girl if they want! That's right, no pesky requirements, no rules, if you want to be a hero, you *can* be a hero!

Simply volunteer, and we can transform you to real Magical Girls! No payment necessary! As this is the first time we're debuting this technology, we want participants from everywhere!

Have a little faith, and let the door to a world of dreams and magic be open to you!

PROLOGUE

☆ Shadow Gale

The Hitokouji manor was under attack.

It happened suddenly, at 1 AM in the morning. No warning at all.

Long ago, the Hitokouji manor was built on top of a hill, overlooking a small town. It was a symbol of leadership and prosperity to the village.

Plenty of workers made the manor look magnificent.

Checkerboard white and black floors, a hedge maze, a large presence that overlooked the entire village.

The manor was decorated with mostly bird-themed statues, and lavished with a golden tint.

Construction workers came in day-in-day-out, finishing up in weeks.

After its construction, it was where the Hitokoujis lived for generations. Supported by their loyal family butlers, the Totoyamas.

Hitokoujis and Totoyamas were loyal to each other. Master and Servant, but also loyal friends. One would give their life for the other.

Mamori Totoyama was taught this, ever since she was a child.

She was given the name 'Mamori', meaning 'To Protect'. She was going to be the protector of her generation of Hitokouji. She will be her shield, and if need be, she will be her sword.

Always watching out for her, like a shadow. A guardian angel. A protector. Most of all, a friend.

Kanoe Hitokouji.

Kanoe loved her family. She cherished them among all else. Her grandfather was someone she cared for a lot, always talking and spending time with him.

After he was gone, Kanoe became the new head of the Hitokouji household.

She had always looked out for the people in town. She worked hard to protect them. Some people praised her, some people hated her. Kanoe didn't much care, nor did she show her true feelings to them.

The only person Kanoe really trusts is her close family.

Ever since her grandfather died, the only family she has is Mamori.

They were introduced, as is custom, when they were children. Kanoe and Mamori played together, and bonded through the years.

Kanoe always showed her good side to others, but with Mamori, she was more free to become herself.

So Mamori could see both the good sides to her...

...and the bad sides, too.

Mamori was loyal to Kanoe. She'd still give her life for her in an instant. However, there were times when Kanoe would do questionable acts.

Mamori believed that Kanoe was a good person at heart, but she also knew she was manipulative, and can be uncaring of others, until her goal was achieved.

Mamori was there to ensure that Kanoe doesn't fall off into the deep end.

Mamori knew what Kanoe was capable of without any control.

When they were in elementary, Mamori had been bullied relentlessly by some children. She was called a 'lapdog', always obeying Kanoe without question. Kanoe took this personally.

Whatever she did to those kids that bullied her, they never showed up at school for a few weeks.

Then they became Magical Girls.

Mamori became the Magical Girl known as *Shadow Gale*. Her power, to upgrade and remodel objects.

Kanoe had become the Magical Girl known as *Pfle*. Her power is a wheelchair that can move incredibly fast.

The first thing they did after their first transformations was to make use of Shadow Gale's powers.

Pfle had Shadow Gale modify her wheelchair. She now had lasers for weaponry, as well as a variety of other gadgets on it.

Then, she had Shadow Gale install defenses in Hitokouji manor. Weapons, intruder detection systems, and maybe even enhance some entertainment systems in their manor, while they're at it.

Shadow Gale's powers have grown, and she's learned how to best use it.

She knows that she doesn't have to know how the original object works in order to modify it.

She also knows that she needs to know what she wants the object to become after using her magic. Touching something in the hopes that it'll remodel itself won't work.

Other than that, her magic has fairly limitless potential.

She just hoped Pfle wasn't using it for anything bad.

In their selection test, Pfle had played a huge gambit in order to protect both of them. Shadow Gale knew of this.

She knew what Pfle was capable of.

Pfle cares about Shadow Gale, but Shadow Gale is worried that Pfle will destroy herself in the process.

After they participated in another game where they barely made it out with their lives, Pfle had applied for the Land of Magic.

She had gotten a position at the Human Resources Division. Her resources and intelligence allowed her to soar through the ranks. High enough that she received a subordinate.

Shadow Gale knew little of what Pfle was doing in the Land of Magic, aside from the things she tells her.

It seems being in the Human Resources Division guarantees a large network of contacts to go with.

Pfle often told her of these contacts sometimes. Sometimes she kept them a secret. Never the full story, but always the truth.

The most recent thing Pfle had Shadow Gale do with her powers is modify a pair of mysterious goggles.

She made them able to transmit written information, as well as cause signal disruption, strong enough to affect Magical Phones within a large area of effect.

Shadow Gale was suspicious of this order, but Pfle assured her it's for a reason.

Shadow Gale cares about Pfle.

She doesn't want her to become something she will regret.

She knows there is a good person inside of her, but it's wrapped inside someone else. A manipulative, cold person.

Shadow Gale will remain by her side. Protect her. Save her.

She can't bear losing her either.

In a secure bunker underground, Shadow Gale and Pfle were hiding out. The manor was under attack, but they should be safe here.

The bunker was built by Shadow Gale's magic.

It has the strength to withstand a nuclear blast. It was built in case an army of Magical Girls ever decide to attack them.

It's been an hour since the attack...

They should be safe here...

The wall had monitors that watched over every room in the manor.

Men in what seems to be padded battle suits, covering their faces in helmets, guns at the ready, seem to be swarming the house.

Pfle was sitting at her chair, staring at the monitor.

Shadow Gale approached her,

“My lady, do you know these people?” asked Shadow Gale.

“No. No I do not.”

“So they’re not Magical Girls, right? We can take them if they’re just people, right?”

“They got past our defenses, Mamori. I wouldn’t underestimate them. Look at how they move.”

Shadow Gale looked at the monitors.

Upon closer inspection. The men were moving rather... strangely. It wasn’t smooth. It was a sort of jerking movement, their movements weren’t telegraphed by their heads. Their joints seemed to move on their own.

Body control? Puppetry? Mind control?

“I think a Magical Girl is behind this,” said Pfle.

“Then we should call for backup, right?”

“How so?”

“The Land of Magic. They’ll send help, won’t they? Aren’t you in the HR Division?”

Pfle smiled. She nodded, but she also sighed,

“Actually, I think this might be their idea,” said Pfle.

“What do you mean?”

“My position is pretty high up in Human Resources. If they truly think I’m in danger, they’ll send help before we know it. But it’s been an hour now, and we haven’t received any assistance at all.”

“What are you saying, my Lady?”

“I’m saying that maybe these people are from the Land of Magic.”

“Why!?”

Did Pfle do something to trigger this response? What was she up to now?

“My best guess is the Examination Division. Perhaps they sent someone to come after me.”

The Examination Division?

What did Pfle do!?

“Mamori, you need to protect yourself. They’re not after you, they’re after me.”

“I’m not just leaving you here.”

Pfle looked at Shadow Gale. She stroked her chin.

“Perhaps you’re right to call the Land of Magic, Mamori. I have just the person to call.”

“You... You do?”

“Call Lapis Lazuline.”

That name made Shadow Gale's chest hurt. Her heart sank upon hearing it. Memories came flooding back.

Lapis Lazuline was part of the victims of their game.

Shadow Gale and Pfle still visit those graves, to pay respect to them, always remembering them in their hearts, using them to move forward with their lives.

In the process of trying to rebuild Lazuline's family, Pfle had discovered that Lazuline was not the first.

She was the Second Lapis Lazuline.

After some more digging, Pfle found a Third.

The Third Lapis Lazuline possesses a powerful Magical Skill,

To take and store memories.

"Have Lazuline come through the gates. Your magic will let her pass without the Land of Magic knowing she was ever here."

"Why send *her*?"

"Because whoever is behind these attacks will come for me. If they catch me, they'll interrogate me. They will use *everything* to get information out of me. I can't afford to break. If I don't know what happened, they can't force it out of me."

Shadow Gale gulped in fear.

"Don't worry, Mamori. It's not you they're after."

"And the memories? What's in there?"

"Lazuline can store the memories to someone else. They won't understand the context, and when she's ready, she can give them back to me."

"But what's in those memories, my Lady?"

Pfle didn't answer.

She looked up at Shadow Gale and smiled, "Well, shall we make the call?"

CHAPTER 1

BEYOND THE PRISM

☆ Prism Cherry

Sakura Kagami was an ordinary junior high school student.

She wasn't someone you'd call ugly, but certainly not someone you'd call pretty.

In her school singing competition, she wouldn't win the best, not even Top 5, but she also wouldn't sink low enough to be bad.

In sports, she'd receive a good job from her coach, but wouldn't receive praise. Yet, she wouldn't lose a game if she tried.

When her friends were asked about Sakura, they would say,

"Oh... she's here and there. Jack of all trades, I think. She's not really out there, but she's not really bad either."

She was just average. Your run-of-the-mill average girl next door...

...Or so people always thought of her that way.

Personally, Sakura hated that thought.

Sakura was the kind of girl who had a 'I can succeed if I do my best' attitude. As a kid, she tried out for sports and worked hard to get to the top, but there are people better than her.

In the swimming club, she tried to become the best, but of course, there are others who made the cut more than her.

She tried to make lots of friends as well, and while she made some close ones, she wasn't very popular.

Sakura liked to think of herself as the main character of her story. She wanted to become something special, so she tried hard to achieve that dream.

Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way. Sometimes you win some, sometimes you lose some.

But damn the world if they think they can keep her down easily.

She was labeled as just your average girl, but Sakura always tried something new every time. She'd join clubs, meet new people, and become active in them.

Most of her efforts probably failed because she tried to do too many things at once.

She entered Middle School afterwards.

Middle School was when she thought her life had changed.

One day, there was a poster stuck to the wall. It was invisible at first glance, or at least it was invisible to others.

Sakura didn't know that the words written on it were written with a magical pen, visible only to those with Magical Potential.

The words seemed faded to her, and she'd probably missed them if not for her taking a curious look.

She could only see the words if she looked close. Super close.

Magical Girl Selection Test

It contained instructions, and a map. It instructed Sakura, and potentially others, to arrive in a certain place at a certain time.

Sakura was curious, if a bit skeptical. She went for it anyways.

The directions were towards a building in the middle of town. It was empty, but Sakura entered it anyways.

Nobody was here but her.

She was worried that it might be some kind of scam, but then, her fears were gone.

She was transformed just there and then.

A cherry placed on her head.

Her hair becoming diamond blue.

A translucent dress that reflected the surroundings around her.

Diamonds and mirrors decorating her outfit.

She had transformed into a Magical Girl.

Her name,

Prism Cherry.

Sakura was excited. She was excited at the prospect of this new life. When she transformed, she didn't think too much of it.

She felt like she was chosen. She was ready. She's going to be a hero!

Months passed.

Sakura wasn't a hero.

Most of her time was spent helping people return lost bikes, or cleaning trash. Basic things, nothing extreme at all.

She had learned about the Land of Magic at that time.

Apparently, her selection test was unique.

It was unique because she was the only one that showed up. By sheer coincidence, no one else with Magical Potential saw the flyers scattered around town.

Probably because they were fliers, and people hated advertisements.

Since she was the only one that showed up at the appointed time, she automatically passed the test.

That's a little disappointing.

She even thought that her Magical Skill was a bit lame.

To be able to change things in mirrors.

At first she was confused. Then she checked her abilities. She placed some trash bags in front of the mirrors, and sure enough, she could change it to be invisible.

But the actual trash bags were still there.

What's the point of a power like that? It's not even useful in any way.

Reality doesn't change if Cherry changes their reflections. It didn't really help her in her work, nor was it useful for anything else.

Sometimes she'd use it for entertainment. She'd go to a local ballerina practice hall, with huge mirrors lined up. She'd sneak in and stage a show of herself, having fun, becoming the hero.

That's fun and all, but it still didn't change reality.

At some point, she asked the Land of Magic how she can improve herself. The Land of Magic then said that there was a meeting of Magical Girls who want to test their combat abilities.

Excited, Cherry immediately signed up and participated.

At the event, she saw so many different Magical Girls. All were trying to prove their strength.

The event was a fight to test your skills, both magic-based and physically. Winners of this tournament have the potential to be recruited to the Examination Division.

Some honorable winners would also be awarded with a possibility of mentorship with more combat-oriented Magical Girls.

Cherry tried to fight with them, but every match she got, she was beaten down and defeated. Her body hurt from the actual strain of fighting these other Magical Girls.

They were too fast, too powerful, too strong.

These were truly the best of the best. Cherry's powers couldn't even help her in this situation, so it's like she was entering with no powers at all.

There were a sea of masters and fighters, and Cherry was lost among them.

Prism Cherry went back to her ordinary daily life.

Sometimes she'd talk to a Land of Magic official to get her mind off of things. Just to hear the news too.

“Lose the fights?”

“More like I lost the prelims.”

“Oh. Shame.”

“They were pretty good.”

“Yeah, Land of Magic’s been increasing their security lately. Tightening up their tests. If you can’t defend yourself, or you don’t pass standards, you just don’t pass. Surprised you got through when you did.”

“I uh... was the only one in my selection test.”

“Really? Huh... Explains it. No offense, of course.”

“None taken. So... what are the other Magical Girls, the successful ones like?”

“Well, they’re here and there. Some are out fighting terrorists. Some use their powers to help their daily life. There’s a rumor of a singer using some charming voice power to boost sales, for example. Borderline illegal if you ask me, but it doesn’t hurt anyone, so resources aren’t being wasted on that. Then there are the others who become recluses. Live with their Mascot partners somewhere, out in the woods, free of any care in the world.”

“Wow... sounds pretty wild.”

“It can be. I’m glad it is, y’know? I miss this.”

“What?”

“Just being peaceful and all that.”

“It’s nice. I kinda wanna see some action, though.”

“Mm, understandable. Hey kid, you said ‘successful’ earlier. Don’t sell yourself short, okay?”

Cherry nodded, and left, back to her daily life again.

Both as Sakura Kagami and as Prism Cherry, Sakura felt like she had tried her best and still couldn’t achieve much.

It’s hear in her second year of Middle School that she had to accept a fact of life.

The universe didn’t revolve around her.

The universe didn’t start when she was born.

The universe will move on when she dies.

She wasn’t a main character. She never was. The truth of life is simple,

There is no main character.

Everyone is the protagonist of their own story.

Everyone wants to make it work.

If they can’t keep up with others, then it’s their own fault.

She wasn't special. She wasn't chosen. And she's not thinking this trying to pity herself, either.

Nobody was special. If they wanted to *be* special, they had to make the world notice them. The thought scared her.

She used to be naïve, but she had gotten used to this. It didn't break her spirit.

She wanted to make a name for herself. She wanted to be known for something.

Sakura will become a hero.

All the people she had seen and idolized, she had only seen their results, not the effort they put into them.

And so Sakura won't give up.

She may be an ordinary girl, and she may just be an ordinary Magical Girl, but she'll keep trying until she finds that chance. Until she finds that moment where she'll be a hero.

Sakura Kagami isn't a main character, but she damn well will make the world know that she's worth it.

The next day, Sakura was getting ready to go home from Middle School. She greeted some of her classmates.

One of them, a fairly pretty girl, who didn't really talk to her much before, approached her. Nami Aoki.

She recognized her by name, because she was a fairly popular girl in school. Lots of friends, high social status, bright, energetic.

Why was she talking to her again?

"Hey, Sakura. I got something to ask you. You mind?"

"Uh... sure, what's up?"

Nami pulled her into the school hallways, not near anyone they knew.

"So... Sakura... you're a Magical Girl, aren't you? I saw you transform on the roof the other day!"

The question took Sakura by surprise,

"Wha... Huh? What... Magical Girl? What do you mean?"

"Relax, Sakura! I'm a Magical Girl, too!"

"Wait... What!?"

That day, Nami showed Sakura her transformation at the end of school.

Nami looked amazingly beautiful, far outclassing Sakura in terms of looks alone. Her stylish outfit made Sakura gasp in awe.

Nami Aoki is a Magical Girl.

Her name,
Princess Deluge.

☆ **Fal**

“Snow White. Wake up, time for dinner, Pon!”

The Cyber Fairy, Fal, had appeared from the Magical Phone laid down on the floor.

He looked around the room,

“Your mother’s going to be very worried if you come down late, Pon!”

The futon was empty. Snow White’s stuff was scattered throughout the floor. The entire room was empty.

She wasn’t home...

...Out working, again.

Fal sighed, and returned back to his digital form. Reports still had to be sent, after all.

Still, he worries for Snow White.

After Snow White had rescued him from his former master, Fal had been happy to serve any new master that wanted him.

He became partners with Snow White. During his time, he saw the extent of what Snow White was capable of doing.

Being assigned as Snow White’s mascot meant that Fal was able to monitor messages coming towards Snow White.

There was one that kept being ignored, or at least averted by Snow White.

Messages from someone named Ripple.

According to Snow White, she didn’t want to endanger her by making contact with her at all. At first, Fal respected this decision.

Then he saw what Snow White could do on her own.

Snow White was known as the Magical Girl Hunter, and she didn’t earn that name for no reason.

She had been one of the two survivors of Cranberry’s tests. In the time since then, Snow White has captured and arrested over 30 rogue Magical Girls.

Some people are in awe of the achievements, while others laughed, as it seems to be a small number for such a ‘feared’ figure.

Some of those missions included taking down the Lake of Fire, Flame Flamey.

Flame Flamey was not an easy Magical Girl to take down. She was a graduate of Mao Pam’s ‘*Mao School*’.

Mao Pam was a legendary figure, who trained Cranberry herself. She also hosted various

battle royales.

The Hell Survival Games, where the best of the best fighters gathered.

Some of the participants of the 36th Tournament were legends such as Cutie Altair, and Magical Girls such as Flame Flamey herself, The Blue Dragon Panasu, and the second Lapis Lazuline.

All of these Magical Girls were skilled in combat, and Snow White had to find a way to defeat Flame Flamey.

She spent days tracking her down, finding out her weaknesses, planning in advance.

When she faced Flame Flamey, she faced her with all her cards at hand, a method to defeat her, and no fear.

That's why they called her the Magical Girl Hunter, because she wasn't a battle-hungry fighter,

She was a patient and efficient hunter.

She stalks her prey, she sets traps for them, she finds out their weaknesses, and then she exploits them.

To the outside world, this is what Snow White was.

She was offered an honorary position on the Land of Magic, as well as becoming an external staff member of the Examination Division.

Officially, Snow White wasn't in the Examination Division, as she hasn't been properly trained, or sanctioned.

However, she was so good at her job, and she was so efficient, that the Land of Magic would give her 'anonymous tips' and free passes.

Essentially, she was unofficially one of them.

The very mention of the Magical Girl Hunter coming to town was enough to get some rogue Magical Girls to surrender.

Snow White would be more than happy to take them in.

Some, however, resisted.

That's when she would have to get... forceful.

Fal remembered the last time it happened. Snow White had fought hard against one Magical Girl.

She was a strong one, able to endure many of Snow's attacks, and she gave Snow a lot of trouble.

Fal could only watch, as he was just a Cyber Fairy.

Eventually, bloodied and bruised, Snow got the upper hand. She managed to turn the fight in her favor, but she didn't stop.

She pushed herself to the limit, angry and enraged, and pummeled the poor girl, even after

she was unconscious.

Fal had to step in.

Fal had to remind her of who she was.

Fal had to prevent her from becoming what Cranberry was.

There were days like this, where Snow would be a bit unhinged. That's why Fal stayed by her side. He was, and always will be, her partner.

He owes her that much.

Outside, Snow White may be a legend, a hero, or even someone to be feared.

But Fal knew that inside that, was a broken girl.

Sometimes, Snow White didn't take Fal with her. Usually on the more dangerous missions. She was afraid that if something happened to her, that something will happen to him as well.

On those nights, Snow White would come home, bloodied, battered, tired. She'd wobble from the window. She'd try to take some Healing Medicine. She collapsed on the futon. She'd pass out for hours at a day.

Fal would always ask her if she's okay, but Snow insisted that she's fine.

She overworks herself, sometimes.

That's when Fal decided to break his promise.

He contacted Ripple.

He told her that he was Snow White's mascot, a partner. He consulted with her, told her Snow White's actions.

Ripple was a good friend, and was also worried for Snow White.

She resolved to join the Land of Magic, properly, in order to help her from the inside.

And then she went missing.

Ripple went missing.

Snow White was the first to be informed of this. When she found out from a tip that Ripple had been assigned to an Investigation team in B-City, she tried to reach her.

Unfortunately, there seemed to be a blackout in B-City. Not only that, there was a barrier surrounding it as well.

Snow White couldn't enter.

She could only hope that her friend had made it out.

After the barrier was lifted, she immediately went inside the city. She looked everywhere for signs of a body.

She had to be careful, as Land of Magic officials had come for what remained of the survivors. Snow White, however, was trying to find her friend, Ripple.

Throughout her search in B-City, she found wrecked buildings, ruined streets, a crashed train, so many bodies.

She looked through all of them, investigating one by one.

Then she found what seemed to be a giant hole in the ground. The surrounding battlefield was ruined, but Snow White still looked for any kind of body.

She didn't find Ripple's, so why isn't she here?

For weeks, Snow White used all of her contacts to try and find Ripple. She had abandoned her usual hunts in order to find her friend.

She followed trails, clues.

Ripple was sent to B-City under 7753. She wasn't quite sure who that was. The only thing she knows was that she may have worked in the Human Resources Division.

She used her Land of Magic contacts to try and find people close to Ripple at that point.

She found out the leader of the Investigation team had been hospitalized. Unfortunately, she wasn't allowed to speak with her.

Dead end.

She tried another way, she looked through the files of the B-City Incident. The leader of the Investigation Team was part of the Examination Division, so they should have some files.

Then she confirmed it. What she saw broke her heart.

Ripple had died.

She never reported back to the Investigation team. She was last seen heading to fight another Magical Girl, and... nothing.

Fal saw Snow White sank further into despair.

For the next few days, Snow White stayed in her human form. She chatted with friends, she laughed alongside them, and she hung out with them as Koyuki Himekawa.

Fal encouraged this, he wanted Snow White to be happy.

This was Snow White's way of coping.

She has nobody now. So she tries to make do with the friends she still has outside of her Magical Girl life.

But she has nobody who knows, or shares her experiences. Ripple was the only one who was truly left.

They both survived Cranberry's tests and lost close friends.

No one else understood that feeling.

Fal felt guilty, as he feels like this was his fault. Telling Ripple about Snow White, causing her to try and join the Land of Magic, leading up to all this.

At the same time, he wanted Snow White to simply be happy with her life, to retire, and to live peacefully.

For a while, this was true. She *was* happy.

For a time, at least.

She spent 3 months or so untransformed. Spending her time with her friends. Trying to go back to normal.

She began to slowly move on from Ripple's death, and accepted it.

There was regret in her eyes, that they haven't met again in such a long time.

Then Snow White received the message.

It was a message from the Examination Division.

'Pythie Frederica is confirmed to still be at large.'

That was all it took.

Snow White became the Magical Girl Hunter once again. Sacrificing her body and her mind to fight any evils of Magical Girls.

Pythie Frederica must've brought horrible memories to Snow White, but to immediately relinquish her recuperation.

To go back to this dangerous job.

"Why are you doing this to yourself, Pon?"

"Because I have to be the one to deal with the bad guys."

"You don't have to, Pon."

"Good people are the easiest to destroy, bad people are the easiest to create. I have to change that."

She's doing it because no one else will.

No, that's wrong.

She's doing it so there won't have to be anyone else doing it.

That night, she didn't take Fal on her hunt.

She came back home worse than before. She could barely stand.

The rogues she hunted that time were already prepared for her. She was out of shape, but she edged it out.

She was already forcing herself back to the world she left. After bandaging herself up, she fell on the futon, unable to move.

Fal could only watch in sorrow.

He knows what she's doing.

She's trying to use her own body as bait.

She *wants* rogue Magical Girls to go after her.

It makes her job easier. She wants to throw herself to the wolves, because she's hunting the wolves themselves.

The rumors about her efficiency, her ruthlessness, the fear she's creating to the rogue Magical Girls.

All of them had *some* basis of truth, but were greatly overexaggerated. Snow White wanted the Magical Girl Hunter title to mean something to her enemies.

She knows that reputation can get you a long way.

Either way, she's going to kill herself at this rate.

Snow White's breathing was heavy, her movement was slow, scratches and blood, her muscles must've been sore.

A Magical Girl's body can heal, but it will take some time. She didn't even warm up. She just went back.

How am I supposed to help you if you're not willing to help yourself?

As Snow White's mascot, Fal had access to Snow White's messages.

As Snow White's reputation grew, so did the variety of prank texts and false alarms.

Luckily, thanks to his old master, Keek, Fal was different than other Cyber Fairies. Unlike most normal Cyber Fairies, Keek heavily engineered him.

Keek modified him, and she used her own paranoia to outfit him with the best anti-spying measure.

Fal was able to detect the sender of a text, regardless of how hard they try to keep this a secret.

No other Cyber Fairy can do this, unless they happen to be linked to all Magical Phones at once. Fal didn't need to.

He used this to sort out the spam and the real threats. Snow White relied on him for this. While Snow White was away, he sorted through her daily messages for the day.

Then he found something.

A text sent from Ripple.

What is this?

Fal doesn't make mistakes. His programming was absolute. This is most definitely from Ripple. At the very least, it's from her Magical Phone.

Was Ripple alive?

If she was alive, why doesn't she show her face?

Did someone use Ripple's phone? If so, who?

Fal was nervous, but he opened the text regardless. There was no introduction or subject in

the text, and it was completely straightforward.

In S-City, you'll find a research facility.

The facility supposedly is researching the creation of Man-Made Magical Girls.

As the Magical Girl Hunter, would you kindly investigate this?

This is a one-time offer. You have a limited time to head to S-City, whereupon you will agree to the conditions of this message.

Tell no one.

If you break any of these rules, specialized magic will erase you and your mascot's memories of this message and its contents

That's strange.

This certainly wasn't Ripple's way of writing, but it was sent from her phone. That being said, the contents of this message were also strange.

What kind of magic could erase your memories from a phone? Fal had never heard of such a thing. He didn't even think that was possible.

He thought for a while.

Bobbing back and forth, sprinkling colorful ribbon-like things everywhere.

He decided,

He was going to tell Snow White about the message.

☆ **Prism Cherry**

That night, Prism Cherry was just innocently wandering off. She didn't mean to get spotted. She was lucky that it was another Magical Girl.

Prism Cherry was assigned to guard her district, the Marudan District.

After about 4 days of nothing, she decided to take small breaks. It got kind of boring not being able to do anything for a long time.

Patrols were mostly silent. No crimes, not much happening. People were very peaceful around there.

One time on her patrol, she saw a fireworks festival. Far off in the Palace District.

She decided to skip off to that district and watch the show from the rooftop.

Unfortunately, Magical Girls have night vision, so the fireworks didn't have the same charm.

Because of this, Cherry transformed back into Sakura.

As a human, she could witness the beautiful fireworks display as it lit up the night sky. She spent about half an hour staring at it.

After it was over, she transformed into Prism Cherry and went back on her merry way.

How could she have known that a passerby would see her?

Nami Aoki.

“I saw you transform on the roof the other day!”

Those words made Cherry shudder. She knew what would happen if her cover was blown as a Magical Girl.

The Land of Magic would take away her powers and her memories, and she'd just be Sakura Kagami once again.

She may be an ordinary Magical Girl, but that doesn't mean she wants to give it away! She hasn't even had a chance to prove herself yet.

“I'm a Magical Girl, too!”

At the sound of those words, Cherry was relieved.

The two of them talked after school, and they agreed to meet up on the same rooftop that Sakura transformed in.

A little embarrassing, but worth it.

She was lucky that the one who saw her was another Magical Girl.

The next day at school, several of her classmates spoke to her.

“You talked to Nami!?”

“What's she like?”

“Wait, did she actually approach you?”

“Sakura, what'd you talk about?”

Nami was a popular girl at school. People wanted to befriend her. Nami approaching Sakura out of the blue must've shocked her entire class.

It was unusual for the two to even talk, since they had almost nothing in common, nor did they ever meet.

In the beginning of the school year, the teachers would assign groups in the class, for assignments and whatnot.

Sakura was assigned to a different group from Nami.

The groups were permanent, so they practically have zero reason to talk to each other.

...Until now.

“Ah, yeah... It's just, y'know, she wanted to ask me if I knew anything about theater! I had singing experience, so...”

“Really? What'd you say?”

“Things... stuff, singing... acting... okaygottagobye!”

Sakura didn't want to hang around for too long.

She went to the meeting place.

She's gotta admit, she's a bit anxious. To think there would be another Magical Girl so close-by. What are the odds?

Wait...

What *are* the odds?

She was the only Magical Girl in her selection test, there shouldn't *be* another Magical Girl in the city. Unless there was another selection test?

The Land of Magic never informed her.

Certainly, her regional officer didn't inform her, either. She texted them just in case.

'Excuse me. Just wondering. Is there a Magical Girl in charge of the Palace District?'

The reply came afterwards,

'No, there isn't.'

She responded,

'Are there any Magical Girls other than me in S-City? In charge of any districts?'

The reply came again,

'No. Unfortunately, you're the only one in the last selection test. We haven't held another for a while'.

That response made her nervous.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Sakura!"

A voice from behind her brought her back to her senses.

She saw the girl standing in front of her.

Her hair was a light blue hue, as light as the sea. On her right leg, were stockings, or was that armor? It was in the form of fish scales.

Her waist had wing-like decorations. Wait, they weren't wings, they were ocean waves. White ocean waves, as her skirt.

Her chest had a small diamond with a chain linked to it.

She was holding a long and large trident. A fancy design, with a blue pearl separating the 3 prongs.

On her head was a tiara, with a glowing blue jewel in the center of it.

"...Nami?"

"What's up? You can't tell it's me? C'mon, now, haha! Oh, right! I haven't properly introduced myself!"

She raised and bent her right leg, she placed her left arm on her chest, and held her trident at a downward angle.

"The Blue Torrent! *Princess Deluge!*"

Oh my.

She has a fancy pose.

She held that pose for about 10 seconds, before twirling her trident and setting it on the roof. Casually holding it as well.

“Aaaand... *you* are?” asked Deluge.

“Wah?? Uh... I’m uh... *Prism... Cherry!* Er...”

Cherry had been half-deciding on doing a spontaneous pose, but decided not to, and just awkwardly fidgeted around.

“Prism Cherry? That’s such a cute name! You even got a little cherry on your head! That’s so cool!”

“Oh... thanks! Hehe... Princess Deluge is pretty cool too. The tiara fits it.”

“You think so? Nice, nice! So, which facility were you from?”

“Huh?”

Cherry was taken aback.

Facility?

Deluge asked a strange question to her. She had no idea if she meant something else entirely, or if maybe she just misheard her.

“I only know of one lab in the city, so... were you from out of town?” asked Deluge.

Lab? Facility? Did Deluge think Magical Girls were built in a lab or something?

Then Cherry remembered,

No other Magical Girls.

Can’t be a coincidence. Cherry decided that she wanted to find out more, but she wasn’t sure what to say, or rather, what to even report to the Land of Magic.

“I’m... not from a lab, actually,” said Cherry.

“Huh!? How’d you become a Magical Girl, then?” asked Deluge.

“I was kinda... transformed?”

“Really!? Wow, you must be super special! I had to go to one of the facilities! Just getting transformed like that! That’s awesome!”

Cherry admitted, she liked the praise. It made her feel like she’s something special.

Still, she knows that it’s just Deluge not knowing what she’s talking about. Cherry was still willing to investigate what this is all about.

But how would she even start?

“So, I wanted you to meet some of my friends, actually. If you don’t mind, of course!” said Deluge.

Friends?

Other Magical Girls?

Others like her?

“Wait... there’s others?”

“Yeah! Are you the only one, Cherry?”

“Um... well, yeah. Kinda sorta...”

“The only one *and* you were transformed? Wow, you’re like... The Chosen One or... something, hehe!”

Cherry blushed a bit when Deluge said that.

If only this girl knew.

“My friends would *love* to meet you, they’re good girls, I promise!”

“I’d love to meet them too!”

“Awesome! I’m sure we’ll get along just fine.”

“Lead the way!”

Cherry was actually excited to meet other Magical Girls.

At the same time, she was interested in Deluge’s actual backstory. How did she become a Magical Girl? What lab? What’s going on?

Maybe, this was a twist of fate.

Maybe if Cherry can get to the bottom of this, she can become the hero she’s always wanted to be.

She hoped that would be the case.

The two travelled to the outskirts of the city. When Deluge stopped at an abandoned building, Cherry’s smile dropped.

Expectation, meet reality.

Cherry was hoping that it was some kind of super cool high tech laboratory, but an abandoned building logically seemed to make more sense as a research facility. At least if you’re hiding.

Deluge entered the building, and she opened the door leading to the basement.

There was a keypad on the side of the door, but Deluge didn’t even press it.

“What’s that for?” asked Cherry.

“Oh. Well, we’re supposed to set up a password just in case, but I’d rather not. Too much of a hassle. Besides, not many people just wander off in here, anyways. C’mon, I’ll show you downstairs!”

☆ **Fal**

“No Magical Girls detected within 100 meters, Pon!”

“Extend it.”

“I can only extend up to 200 meters, Pon! You’re going to have to either move around, or get a better Magical Phone, Pon!”

“Then let’s do 200 meters. I’ll walk around. Tell me if you detect anyone.”

“Alright, Pon!”

Fal and Snow White were walking in the shopping district. Fal had been ordered to detect for any Magical Girls in the area.

Snow White started her investigation immediately after seeing the text message.

The first thing she had to do was find other Magical Girls. She wasn’t sure if they were going to be friendly or not, but making contact was important.

Fal was her partner.

He was her mascot.

A lot of people have various misconceptions about mascots. They call their Magical Girls ‘Master’, and most of the time, they are there to assist them. Mascots are even a symbol of status to a Magical Girl. Similar to butlers in a way. If you have your own mascot, you’re a big deal.

But they aren’t slaves.

On the contrary, a mascot’s job is to help the Magical Girl they’re assigned to. That sometimes includes pointing them in the right direction if they stray away from it.

That means supporting them. As a partner, as a friend, giving them advice. Mascots are supposed to be this way.

Recent events have tainted the mascots in the eyes of the Land of Magic. Cyber Fairies, especially.

Most of this can be blamed on the events that happened years ago. The fallout from Cranberry’s tests were still being felt. Mascots weren’t trusted anymore.

A stigma was attached to them, especially cyber fairies, who looked the same, sounded the same, and *almost* acted the same as Fav.

They all had the same tic. They had the same bobbing movement. They had the same smile.

Fal wasn’t to blame, but he understood why it’s like this.

Fal himself couldn’t really experience the fallout firsthand, due to his previous master being Keek.

Fal wasn’t even supposed to be alive.

Keek was searching for discarded mascots. She was looking for dismantled and broken ones. That’s when she found Fal.

FA-00 Series Cyber Fairy.

Keek heavily modified Fal. She made sure that Fal was hers and hers alone. The modifications broke Fal’s mind, but kept his body, or... what you can call a body, strong.

It distorted him, it forcefully changed him.

It made him more powerful than most other Cyber Fairies, and gave him several upgrades over them, thanks to Keek's unique abilities, and knowledge.

However, Keek cared little for Fal's opinions.

Fal hated Keek.

Keek tortured him to no end, all to create the strongest Cyber Fairy. And so, Fal was created. He was, statistically, better than most Cyber Fairies.

But he was broken inside, mental torture and distortion. Most Magical Girls, or people in general, wouldn't care much for Cyber Fairies, because they're AI, unlike other kinds of mascots.

But they also have emotions too. These are not your run-of-the-mill AI like you'd find in the human world. These were powered by magic.

If Cyber Fairies weren't capable of emotion, they wouldn't be capable of evil.

Fav was evil.

Fav did the tests for evil purposes.

That was proof. The one mistake people made.

Fal wasn't evil. Fal tried not to be. But stigma is stigma.

Strong body, broken mind.

In a way, Fal and Snow White were perfect partners.

Fal hated Keek, but he loved Snow White. He cared for her. He wants her to be happy.

Most of all, he respected her, and she respected him. Fal doesn't call Snow White 'Master'. They were close enough together that they go on a first-name basis.

They trust each other.

One might think that it's strange for a Magical Girl to trust her mascot. What is her mascot protecting? A Magical Girl can protect their mascot, but can a mascot protect their Magical Girl?

Fal trusted Snow White to protect him, and Snow White trusted Fal to protect her.

Fal's job was to ensure Snow White remained Snow White.

To ensure that she doesn't fall off the deep end.

To ensure that inside her broken self, there's something still holding her together.

That's what he's protecting.

Fal has been comparing Snow White to Keek, but what does Snow White feel about Fal?

Snow White never really talks about these things. She's not that kind of person, at least not anymore.

Does she care about Fal? Is she just using Fal?

Cyber Fairies have been looked down upon lately. Ever since Fav was revealed to be the mastermind behind Cranberry's tests.

A Cyber Fairy? No thanks, they're probably evil.

Gah, I'd rather have some other kind of fairy.

Why do you have a Cyber Fairy?

Their design probably didn't help them either.

People's first reaction when seeing a Cyber Fairy after Fav was probably hatred. Like it or not, Fav had shaped the opinions of the entire Cyber Fairy species.

Post-Cranberry, Cyber Fairies rarely get used. The only time they would is due to their usefulness.

Of course, former winners of Cranberry's tests usually would be reminded, or feel nauseous, after one look at a Cyber Fairy. At least that's one good thing.

Snow White hunting down the Children of Cranberry, and using Fal to intimidate them. At least he's useful then.

Fal didn't think Snow White subscribed to the Cyber Fairy hate. She's kept him all these years, after all.

Fal is a special Cyber Fairy, thanks to Keek.

He somewhat shared the powers that Keek shares. In a short distance, Fal could transport Snow White and someone else to a miniature pocket cyber world.

This way, ambushes in real life won't affect the people around her.

The power was modified by Keek herself, as she would take Fal around with her wherever she went.

The power was only useful for emergencies, and is definitely not as strong as Keek's actual abilities.

"No one?" asked Snow.

"There's too many people. Scanning everything is getting a bit slower, Pon. I'll have to reduce the radius of my search if I want to find them faster, Pon."

"No. Keep the radius. Reduce the accuracy. Scan clusters of people at a time."

"You're sure, Pon?"

"Yes."

Snow White kept walking, and Fal kept scanning for Magical Girls.

S-City didn't have many Magical Girls to begin with, and it was the 2nd largest city in the local prefecture, the 1st being N-City.

Unlike N-City, which acts like a bustling capital, S-City had more people, but was smaller. As a result, the population density was higher.

"Koyuki?"



A voice of a girl rang out. Who was that?

“Huh?” Snow White turned around as she heard her name being called.

“Oh my gosh, it *is* you! It’s been so long! I didn’t think we’d meet up, here!”

“Akari-Chan?”

“Heyy! Long time no see, Koyuki!”

A girl, slightly taller than the petite Snow White, approached her. Snow White was in her human form, so she wouldn’t know that she’s a Magical Girl.

This girl, Akari, had long dark hair, with brown highlights at the bottom. Her shirt was filled with decorations, and her bag was filled with pins.

She seemed like the party-type.

Snow White was friends with someone like this?

Fal peeked out from Snow White’s bag, without showing himself. He was curious to know what Snow White’s relationships were like.

He was a little jealous, since Snow White could make friends, but at the same time, he felt really proud of her somewhat.

The only friends that Fal knew personally were Ripple, and she’s gone, now...

Snow White and Akari laughed happily, sharing memories. Fal couldn’t tell if Snow’s laugh was genuine, but he was happy for her.

It seems like these two were elementary school friends.

Fal checked Akari’s status.

It returned negative.

Akari wasn’t a Magical Girl.

Fal calmed down, and continued his scan as he searched around.

“Well, it’s nice bumping into you, here! I’ll see you round, kay?”

“Glad we got to meet again after all these years,” said Snow.

“Take care of Yatsu-Chan and Sumi-Chan! Say hi for me!” said Akari as she waved goodbye while jogging away.

A few seconds passed.

“Was she a Magical Girl?”

“No, Pon. It returned negative, Pon.”

“Alright, let’s keep looking, then.”

“It’s getting late, Pon. You sure you wanna keep doing this, Pon?”

“I’ve decided I’m not going back to N-City tonight.”

“Huh?”

“I’m staying in S-City until we get something. A lead. A clue. *Something*.”

“Well, I don’t need to sleep, but I’m worried about you, Pon.”

“I’ll find a place to stay. Just focus on the mission, right now.”

“Alright, Pon.”

Fal was worried.

Fal remembered when Snow White was this focused on finding something.

The night that the barrier of B-City went down. Snow White was waiting outside.

As soon as the barrier went down, Snow White sneaked into B-City, being careful of any Land of Magic officials that were sent to clean it up.

She wanted to get there before they did. She needed to find Ripple.

“We’re not leaving until we find some lead, okay?”

“Okay, Pon.”

“Any survivors?”

“In the outskirts somewhere, Pon!”

Snow White rushed to the place where Fal had detected traces of magical energy. She found the site of a huge battle.

There seems to be blood around most of the site. An enormous amount was centered in the middle, and in a pile of logs.

Two bodies, one lying on what seemed to be a rock, who dragged herself there.

Another whose throat was slit.

Two girls, unconscious. She can’t question them this way.

But there was one that was alive and awake. Floating around, expressionless.

“Do you know about Ripple?”

The girl shook her head.

“A ninja-style Magical Girl. One arm, one eye.”

“Mei was only in a train before this.”

That was a lead.

Snow White looked for a train station. Followed the tracks to a crash site. Aside from the two mangled bodies of what used to be Magical Girls, there was no sign of Ripple.

Snow White’s fist began to shake. Not only was there so much death, it all seemed unnecessary too.

Her anger built up that she punched a dent in one of the train cars that crashed.

Eventually, after scanning the city, she came across every possible battlefield. A giant hole, a ruined apartment, the parking lot of the school.

Nothing. No signs of her.

It took Fal hours to convince Snow White that she didn’t have to look for Ripple in the city.

Now, in S-City, with a similar issue. Man-Made Magical Girls?

Fal hoped that this wasn't a lost cause.

☆ **Princess Inferno**

Underneath the bunker, the monitors of their secret base lit up, and an alarm blared as well.

“ALERT: Disruptors sighted outside of town! 3 Soldier Classes, 1 Knight Class”

Inferno's eyes lit up. The other Princesses quickly jumped into action as well.

Prism Cherry jumped at the alarm. This was her first time, but she also tried to catch up with the other girls.

“We got Disruptors, whoo!” said Princess Tempest.

“Alright, don't rush out!” yelled Princess Quake

“I call elevator,” said Princess Inferno.

“C'mon, Cherry! This'll be fun!” said Princess Deluge.

Still uncoordinated, of course, but they're getting there.

Princess Deluge, Princess Inferno, Princess Quake, and Prism Cherry took the express elevator. Princess Tempest didn't bother. She immediately flew up towards the long stairwell.

As Inferno exited the elevator at the top floor, she saw Tempest waving at them.

“C'mon! C'mon! I'll race ya there!” she said with a smile, as she zoomed through the skies outside.

Tempest was the only one of them who could fly. In a way, it made Inferno a bit jealous. However, at least they've got their speed.

Throughout the city, they jumped across light poles, slid across alleyways, and climbed up buildings, at a speed so fast that humans would miss them if they blinked.

Cherry, however...

...Prism Cherry was struggling to keep up, but she could still run pretty fast.

“Gah... Hah... Hah... Hang on, a bit!”

Deluge was slowing down a bit, if only to support Cherry.

Inferno was happy. She had never felt so free in her life. To run as fast as this, at this speed, with the wind blowing in her face.

I can run again!

So this is what being a Magical Girl was like. She had never imagined a better life than this. The strength, power, and freedom.

Akari Hiyama was a Magical Girl.

Her name,

Princess Inferno.

Using the tiara on her head, she followed the directions towards the edge of the city, where the Disruptors should be found.

As they reached the edge of town, they saw them.

Large black creatures.

Three of them are beastly, on fours, with tusks. One of them had a large humanoid body, but a goat for legs. Like some strange centaur.

3 Soldier Classes, 1 Knight Class.

According to the Professor, long ago, before humans discovered civilization. Ancient beings made a deal with them in order to give them knowledge.

In return, they would seed creatures that will awaken thousands of years from then.

Humans, being foolish, and not thinking long-term, accepted the offer.

Now, invaders from another world, Disruptors, have popped up. Most of them were concentrated in S-City.

The only ones who could stop them are Magical Girls.

They were created within the four Greek elements. The knowledge of these elements were passed down from generation to generation, supposedly as a way to remind humanity that their protectors would come from these elements.

The Disruptors often appeared from underground, which is why the research facilities, to bring back the elements as warriors, were underground, as well as their base.

Thus, the Princesses were created, and Akari was part of this legend, as Princess Inferno.

A secret history.

Superpowered villains.

A team of heroes.

Akari felt like she was really living in a Magical Girl Anime, and she was happy about this.

Now that they've reached their destination, they saw Tempest waving further ahead, near the Disruptors.

"You guys are SLOWPOOOKES," she yelled out.

"Alright, everyone, like we practiced! Together!" said Quake.

"Hah... Okay, okay, I'm ready!" gasped Cherry.

"Alright, Princesses, form up!" said Deluge as she got into position.

Quake in the middle, Deluge to her right, Inferno to her left, and Tempest soaring behind them. They began their signature pose.

"The Blue Torrent! *Princess Deluge!*"

"The Red Blaze! *Princess Inferno!*"

“The White Typhoon! *Princess Tempest!*”

“The Black Earth! *Princess Quake!*”

Princess Quake’s jewel shined yellow, so really it should be the yellow... something. However, most of her outfit was black, so they decided with Black Earth.

Finally, Prism Cherry came in with her pose (still practicing).

“The Shining Radiance! *Prism Cherry!*”

Since Prism Cherry didn’t have a gem, they couldn’t think of a way to do a shout that involved ‘*The [Color] [Noun]*’. Instead, she was given a special pass.

She’s basically a sixth ranger anyways, so like any good sixth ranger in these kinds of shows, she’d be the different one.

Though, it’s uncommon for sixth rangers to join a team this early in a story. Oh well, can’t be helped.

All of them brandished their weapons.

Princess Quake pointed at the Disruptors and shouted out, “Shine brightly and strike fear, *Pure Elements!*”

The Disruptors roared back at them.

Inferno worked quick. She jumped in front of the group, and as her gem grew bright red, she pushed out her palms, and a large blaze of fire shot out of it.

The Disruptors screamed out in pain, a bellowing beastlike roar.

“Too hot for ya? I’ll take care of that,” said Tempest as she released her twinbladed boomerang.

The boomerang was thrown, and created a vortex of air. It seemed to cut through anything that it touches, as it sliced off two of the Soldier Disruptors heads clean off.

“You missed one, Tempest!” said Deluge as she unleashed a torrent of water to one of the Soldier Disruptors. The blast stunned the Disruptor, as Deluge immediately stabbed it in the head with her Trident.

The Knight Disruptor bellowed out, and charged at Deluge.

However, Quake was quick on her feet. She went in front of the charging Knight, and she swung her hammer at its torso, launching the large beast far away.

Quake ran after it, pinning it down as she brought her hammer down to its face.

A quick fight. Only lasted a few seconds at most.

Deluge and Tempest high fived each other.

Quake nodded happily, and Inferno?

Inferno was just happy. This feels great.

Cherry didn’t do much in the battle, but she was still in awe at the speed of the Princesses. She seems new, and wasn’t made in a facility, apparently.

Inferno was a bit curious as to who she was.

Quake came over and put her hands on her hips.

“Well, since we’ve got the day to ourselves, let’s head back and do some combat practice!” said Quake.

“HUUUH!? Why!? I was thinking... y’know, we could have the day off?” said Tempest with a childlike grin.

“Tempest, you *always* think a day off is good, no?” asked Deluge.

“Well, this time Inferno would agree!” said Tempest.

“Huh? I actually *like* combat training,” retorted Inferno.

“But your mom always says that you seem too pre-occupied with stuff to study! Aren’t you kinda *forced* to skip combat training, today?” said Tempest.

“H-Hey! Don’t bring family stuff into this!” said Inferno, embarrassed.

Tempest stuck her tongue out with a smile, teasing Inferno.

The Princesses laughed, and Inferno saw Cherry laughing as well. Her face was red, not because she was mostly fire-based, but because she was embarrassed.

☆ **Prism Cherry**

Prism Cherry couldn’t believe it.

She was in a wonderful adventure with her friends. She wanted to improve herself, sure, because the sheer strength of these Princesses was incredible.

She laughed with them, for once, she was considered part of their family. She was considered someone worth fighting for.

But at the same time, it was like she entered a whole different world.

Disruptors?

Invaders from another world?

Magical Girls made in labs?

Who *were* these Princesses? The bigger question, should Prism Cherry inform the Land of Magic?

They’re not registered in the names of the Land of Magic, and they definitely aren’t considered Magical Girls.

What would you call them, then? Illegal Magical Girls? Was that even possible?

Cherry originally wanted to help them, as well as find out what this strange phenomenon of these new Magical Girls were. However, the more she spent time with them, the more she became close to them.

Despite not being one of the ‘Princess’-type Magical Girls, with a tiara and whatnot, Cherry was welcomed by them.

Despite being outclassed in combat, Cherry was welcomed as well.

Cherry wanted to prove herself, definitely. She had a long way to go, but she found family. In a way, they might be family as well.

They're not blood-related, Prism Cherry already asked that.

They said that they were given the ability to become Magical Girls in a facility, met each other, formed the base, and began bonding.

These girls weren't related, but they were definitely family.

Even so...

There's something that ties them together.

The Princess title.

The tiara.

Quake had a dragon tail, Inferno had a scorpion stinger.

Deluge had her skirt in the shape of white waves, Tempest had leaves around her body.

They were somehow designed this way. As Magical Girls were usually created based on personality, someone *purposefully* created these Princesses this way.

When Cherry asked, Inferno answered that a Professor of some kind gave them these abilities. Apparently, the Professor is busy though, and hasn't shown up.

Cherry was afraid that if she reported to the Land of Magic, they'd capture the Princesses somehow. She didn't want to endanger her new friends.

Besides, there was combat training tonight.

Combat Training seems like a bad idea for Cherry.

The four Princesses weren't holding back.

Quake dodged a boomerang shot and as Tempest was already mid-flight, Quake swung her hammer, hitting Tempest in the face, sending her flying halfway across the arena.

30 meters in radius, with the walls surrounding them underground.

Tempest slammed into a wall.

Cherry gasped and covered her mouth in shock. A blow like that should've smashed her brain in.

Inferno took the chance to move in. She had a flaming scimitar, and her hair seemed to be made of flames as well.

Her Scimitar clashed with Quake's hammer, and as she struggled, Deluge pierced Quake in the back with her trident.

The stab should've hit Quake's spine. Deluge then kneed Quake in the torso, slammed her head with the shaft of her trident, and immediately countered Inferno's blazing flames with her own water-based powers.

These four weren't even holding back.

What *were* these Princesses?

After training, they continued to talk as normal.

It was late at night, and the girls were resting a bit.

"Why don't you join us, next time, Cherry?" asked Deluge.

"I... kinda want to, but... it looks pretty dangerous," said Cherry. She knows that one hit from those Princesses would probably kill her.

"Huh? Aren't Magical Girls super strong, though? We'd barely feel anything, right?" asked Inferno.

"Maybe Cherry's just kinda weak?" asked Tempest.

Inferno bonked Tempest in the head, "Don't say stuff like that in front of her."

"Ow... sorry."

Prism Cherry laughed.

Quake came over to Cherry, "If you ever want to join us, you're always welcome! You're part of the Pure Elements now, Cherry!"

Prism Cherry nodded, "Thank you so much!"

All the Princesses smiled at Cherry. She was welcome here.

She really didn't want to report to the Land of Magic now. She was welcome here. If she did... She'd lose this all. They'd lose it all.

These girls weren't doing anything wrong, either.

There was a moment of silence, where everyone just awkwardly smiled at each other. Tempest broke the silence,

"Well... now that we had a moment of sappy silence, let's switch topics. Why does Inferno look like she's wearing underwear with her form?"

"WHAT?" shouted Inferno with an embarrassed face.

"You're wearing a garterbelt, Inferno. I'd say that's pretty embarrassing," snickered Tempest.

"Y-You realize that Deluge has the same thing, right?" shouted Inferno.

"Nah, she's wearing a swimsuit. She's good."

Deluge scratched her head. She turned over to Cherry, "These two are like this, sometimes. You'll get used to it," said Deluge.

Teasing, playing around, combat training.

Family.

The Pure Elements were family to Cherry.

☆ **Princess Deluge – Nami Aoki**

Nami Aoki had been known in Middle School as a bright and refreshing girl.

She was popular and nice to all her friends. Always ready to socialize at a moment's notice. She was also quite polite herself.

But things weren't always this way.

In Elementary School, Nami was far more outgoing and rough than she is in Middle School.

Nami barely used any honorifics when addressing people in Elementary, she always seemed to use slang, and was practically casual all the way through.

Every day before school, her mother would politely tell her,

“Have a nice day, Nami!”

Nami would reply non-chalantly,

“Yeah, mhmm, sure, mom.”

She wasn't the type to just be nice for the sake of being nice. She'd rather do it her own way, and not care much for how she behaved.

Then, sometime at school. Probably because of some weird thing, or maybe this girl had just pissed someone off, but one of the kids had started a rumor about one of Nami's friends.

The girl lived in Nami's neighborhood, and was a close friend of Nami's. She was a nice girl, really. However, none of that mattered with the rumors.

That's all it takes, a rumor.

She couldn't even remember what it was about. It probably was some stupid thing that an elementary school student would find important.

The cause didn't matter. It was the effect that it had on Nami that mattered.

That rumor made everyone seem to shun her friend.

Nami herself knew about the rumor. Because she wasn't the target of the bullying.

She heard all the talking behind her friend's back. Nami herself wasn't sure if the rumors were true, but as a kid, she became distant with her friend.

She was afraid of what people would think if she befriended someone like that.

Social pressure, at such a young age.

The girl couldn't take it, and then she eventually moved out, after bawling her eyes in school, begging for it to stop.

Nami felt sorry, but she also felt guilty.

That day, at home, Nami had realized that she may have just lost a close friend, because she wasn't there for her. Instead, following what others have said.

But she also realized how easily a rumor or bullying could lead to something like this,

especially for children.

Nami became more socially aware after that.

She became nicer to people, less rough and casual. She was afraid.

She was afraid of being alone.

She had taken her friend for granted, and now she left her. She regretted that decision every day of her life.

So now, she wanted to make sure she was loyal to her friends.

But although this is the case, she was still afraid that she would leave a bad impression on others. This made her slightly more influenced by the other kids.

She was popular because she was so nice in school. Popular because she was flexible, able to blend into most crowds, taking the first step in a conversation.

Nami didn't want to be hated. She wanted people to befriend her. In return, she'll stay loyal to her friends. She won't discriminate, and she'll always be nice to them.

That was normal, right?

One day, after school, she received a text message on her phone.

Magical Girls Wanted.

Nami's heart sank. Was someone playing a prank on her? Was this just teasing, or was someone trying to make a fool of her?

This is possibly just spam mail, but who would do something like that?

Nami considered deleting it, but...

...She desperately wanted to know. If this was a prank, who would want to do something like that to Nami?

Was this a friendly, "Ha, I gotcha!" prank, or a ploy to make a fool of Nami in front of the whole school?

The text asked Nami to reply with a name.

Nami did so. Her curiosity outshining her common sense to just delete the message. How far will they take this?

She waited, and a few days later, she got a reply.

She had almost forgotten about it, honestly.

The reply contained instructions to go to a site, 3PM, where she will receive a briefing to become a Magical Girl.

This must be the part where she gets pranked for real. They must've spent the days to set up the whole thing.

Still...

...Nami was curious.

☆ **Princess Inferno – Akari Hiyama**

When she was a kid, Akari loved to build secret bases. A place where they could hide out from the world.

She and six friends decided to make one. They ventured out to the woods one day, and found a great spot in the forest.

A tree trunk, where they would build a treehouse together.

Akari was in charge of materials, and the other kids were very athletic. Enough to help her out with creating the treehouse.

When the kids finished building it, Akari was proud of their accomplishment. Together, they created something wonderful.

They carved their name on a tree nearby. All six of them, to commemorate this event.

Akari was in Elementary then, now, she was a Freshman in High School.

She wondered if kids still built stuff like that nowadays. She asked her younger sister, who was still in Elementary, about things like this.

Her sister said she never built something like that in her life.

A bit disappointed, Akari thought about heading out and hiking towards the woods. She wanted to see if her treehouse was still there.

She knew the path. She remembered it completely. Though, she lost contact with those six other friends of hers.

Most of them either moved out, drifted away, or just stopped talking.

Akari made her way through the shrubbery and bushes. Past the trees. She remembered the tiny path that she believed only kids would get through.

She hated her past self for that. Akari had to crawl down.

A mantis was sitting on a leaf. Akari swatted it away. She crawled on all fours, and came out to the other side.

Her right knee felt a bit sore, but she was used to that.

Once she got out, she saw the engraving on the tree. The carving of their names. All six of them, still there.

And she saw the treehouse.

Well, it's technically some ruins now.

The house itself has fallen. Years of weather effects must've made it crumble out here in the silent forest.

Still, the nostalgia is there. Akari felt the wood of the fallen treehouse. Memories would come back to her when she touched it.

She was glad that she built it. It's like uncovering an ancient tomb of a once great civilization.

The thought of that made Akari chuckle to herself.

She checked her bag. Pepper spray, a stun gun, a small baton. She was prepared to venture out to enemy territory.

She checked her cellphone again. That one text. She got it a few days ago, and thought it was just a prank. She was the type to want to expose pranksters, so she played along.

Magical Girls Wanted.

When she got a reply, she became even more worried that this might be a kidnapping attempt. She figured this must've been sent to various numbers throughout the city. The address was located. It was too obvious for a kidnapping attempt, but Akari will try.

If someone shows up to try and hurt her, she was prepared.

She bid farewell to a childhood memory, and she descended down the mountainside, away from the forest.

She had to walk a bit slowly.

Akari was an athlete. She was an expert at running, and she joined the track team at an early age.

One day, an incident in her Middle School track team ended that career.

They were in the mountains. It was a schoolwide tournament. Everyone and their family came to see.

Akari was trying to practice for her eventual run. She practiced outdoors, when it was raining and stormy.

During her run, she slipped, and she came tumbling down the mountainside. In the process, she broke her right knee.

She bled a lot, and she screamed and cried.

It took weeks for it to heal, but even now, Akari was unable to run as fast as she could before.

She finished off her makeup in the train station toilet. Finishing up with eyeliner before finally being satisfied.

Your looks are your first impression. Sometimes, looks alone can get you to places that you couldn't, so it was important to have your best appearance at all times.

She rode the train two stations ahead, and went to the address.

The building that she was supposed to go to was a strange one. A Municipal building, unused now, but it used to be bustling with activity a couple years ago.

Definitely suspicious.

She knocked on the door.

"It's open!" cried someone from inside.

The voice of a girl, and it sounded like she was her age, too. Magical Girl? No way.

She entered, and she saw a large room with desks, like a classroom, all set up. She saw three other girls standing in the center of the room.

One of the girls seemed to be her age, but she didn't recognize her. She was probably a Middle School girl.

Another was definitely older than her. She looked to be in her College years.

The last one...

"Aka-Nee-San!? What are *you* doing here?"

"...Mei-Chan!?"

Mei Higashionna. Or Mei-Chan for short, was Akari's sister's friend. Elementary school student, fairly young.

"It's obvious, right? I'm here to become a Magical Girl! What are *you* doing here?"

"Well... Er... Same as you!"

"Wha? Waiiiit, weren't you the one that told us Santa Claus wasn't real that one time in Christmas?"

"...He *isn't*!"

"Then why'd you come here? After all that talk about no proof and stuff, I can't believe you actually came to be a Magical Girl!"

"I don't believe that, either! It's cause... I wanted to make sure whoever's behind this gets a proper beatdown, is all!"

Mei looked at her suspiciously. Akari really didn't know what to say at this point.

Strangely enough, she was saved by the voice of a woman who opened a door from the other side.

"Ah, wonderful! You're all here!"

The woman seemed elegant, in her 50s maybe. A lab coat embroidered with flowers.

Mei gasped in awe, "Whoa... cool design"

"Why thank you! Now then, I assume you're here because you all want to be Magical Girls? Let's begin, then!"

☆ **Princess Tempest – Mei Higashionna**

Darn it!

Why'd she have to show up, too?

Mei was furious that Akari had shown up to the meeting place. She didn't really have a good relationship with Akari.

Well...

...Maybe that's not exactly true.

Mei disliked her.

Mostly because Akari always seems to get all the attention. It comes with being older, and being a teenager.

Mei was just a young kid.

Akari dyed her hair almost every few weeks, changing her highlights whenever she felt like it. It was as if the girl had a changing sense of fashion.

Mei's classmates talk a lot about Akari, too. It didn't help that Mei's best friend was Akari's younger sister.

But things like that didn't exactly bother Mei. Well... it did, but it was nothing compared to what was the most infuriating to Mei.

There was a boy in Middle School. Second year.

His name was Sho.

Sho was kind to the kids. He volunteered at Mei's elementary to teach them, and play with them.

He had a nice and kind smile, and everyone loved him so much.

Mei wanted to hang out with him, to talk with him as well. However, Mei was too young. The age gap was too large. She didn't think he would even notice her, let alone befriend her.

One incident made Mei extremely jealous.

In the mountains, about a year ago, there was a track team competition. It was schoolwide, and Akari was participating.

Her sister came along, and Mei tagged along as well.

Sho, being the caring guy that he was, also came to watch the competition.

For some reason or another, Akari decided to train in the stormy rain. One thing led to another, and she fell.

She fell off and broke her knee.

She cried and screamed, and the teachers as well as Sho came over to help her.

Mei felt jealous of that.

Akari was always the center of attention. It was because she was older, and it was because she was always so beautiful looking.

The battle was weighed in Akari's favor. It was a handicapped match from the start. How could Mei ever hope to compete with something like that?

So when Mei got the text about being a Magical Girl, she was extremely excited.

She wanted to accept that. She talked with her friends about Magical Girls and their shows the next day.

Sometimes Magical Girls transform and change their bodies.

Sometimes they look older than they do before.

The more they talked about Magical Girls, the more excited Mei was.

So now she was here. She'd finally have a leg-up against Akari. She'd become a Magical Girl, she'd look like a teenager, and she can finally talk to Sho!

The perfect plan...

...but Akari showed up, too.

Why does the universe do this to her?

"...Now then, take these gems."

Mei hadn't been paying attention.

The woman said something about... stuff... or things. Mei had been remembering old days.

She saw something on the blackboard.

Magical Girls shouldn't reveal their identity

Magical Girls exist to fight evil

Magical Girls have unique powers

Okay. Summarized.

The woman in front of her placed four colored gems in their palms. She also placed four hand mirrors as well.

There was a 100 Yen price tag on the mirror.

Being a Magical Girl costs 100 Yen?

"Uh... what's the mirrors for?" asked Mei.

"Oh, those aren't magical. They're for you to confirm your form changes. It's the gems. Now then, listen closely," asked the woman.

Mei took a look at the gems that they had. There were four different colors for each gem.

Blue for the Middle School girl.

Red for Akari.

Yellow for the older College girl.

And White for Mei.

"Place the gems on your forehead. Imagine the Magical Girl you wanted to be, close your eyes, and say, *Princess Mode, On!* Doesn't matter if you scream it or whisper it. Go ahead!"

The other girls nervously placed the gems on their foreheads.

Mei happily placed the gem on hers, and closed her eyes.

Should Mei shout it out, or whisper it?

Cutie Healer shouts out her transformation. She's not afraid of bad guys, and she's one of

the most popular of the Cutie series.

However, a more recent season, Cutie Blade, has the Cutie softly, but strongly, say it out. That being said, Cutie Blade was a lot darker than Cutie Healer.

Mei certainly didn't want to become a darker version of her ideal Magical Girl.

Then, it's settled. The orthodox way.

Mei shouted out,

“Princess Mode, On!”

Mei opened her eyes. She didn't feel any different, yet she knows something changed. What did?

She took her hand mirror, and she looked at her own reflection.

A beautiful girl was staring at her.

Mei moved the mirror around. She was wearing a white dress, with leaves covering her body. Her hair was shaped like wings, and the leaves extended behind her. Two green blades were attached to her hips.

She removed the blades, and she found out she can attach them to become a boomerang.

The other three girls have changed as well.

A blue water-like Magical Girl with a trident.

A red fiery Magical Girl with a scimitar and a scorpion stinger.

A black-suited Magical Girl with a gigantic spiked hammer and a dragon's tail.



“YESSSS!!!”

Mei was a Magical Girl, and she looked older too! Like a teenager!

The rest of the girls were gasping and confused, but Mei was happy. She was very, very happy.

“Congratulations! Princess Deluge, Princess Inferno, Princess Tempest, and Princess Quake, you’re now... the Pure Elements!” said the woman.

☆ Princess Quake – Chiko Saitou

Chiko couldn't believe that she was a Magical Girl.

She had a lizard's tail, and was holding a large hammer with her non-muscular hands.

Was this a fake hammer?

She casually slammed it to the ground, and the ground cracked and shook, like an earthquake had hit it.

Nope. This is real.

As a college student, she was used to e-mail scams and other text-based pranks. She didn't even bat her eyes when she saw the text coming towards her.

She ran a personal blog in College. Sometimes she exposed major deals and scandals, and got a little extra cash from leaking the sources to news sites.

That's why she decided to follow through with this supposed scam.

Who would've thought that she actually became a real Magical Girl.

The other girls were surprised and shocked, but one of them, Princess Tempest, was shouting in joy.

Of course, she is still a child. Children are amazing. No matter how absurd the situation is, you can always count on them to be bright.

Actually, there was a second reason why Chiko came to this place.

These scams obviously targeted younger kids, as no adult or someone her age would probably believe this kind of message. So, just in case any children comes here, she wanted to protect them.

She couldn't bear seeing kids hurt at all.

Chiko had never really experienced what one would call a childhood.

Most people tend to think that kids are cute.

Aw, you're such a cutie

What a good girl you are

You're gonna grow up big and strong

It was the default reaction to adults who saw children playing. Especially when parents take their kids over to other parents' houses.

Chiko's father wasn't like that, however.

"Stand up straight. Don't answer anyone. Just focus."

Chiko couldn't exactly have much freedom. She was too busy being told what to do by her father.

Not only that, but during her younger years, Chiko had a growth spurt.

She was taller than the other children, often being mistaken for a Middle Schooler when

she was still younger.

Her nickname in school was *Gi-Ko*, short for Giant Chiko.

Of course, she was about average size now, but her father, combined with her growth spurt, meant that she wasn't really ever treated like a kid when she was... well, a kid.

It didn't bother her while growing up, but now, she longed for that kind of childhood. She wanted to be happy as a kid.

So now, she wants to make sure that children are also happy.

She loved children, and wanted to protect them. The thought of anyone harming them would get her angry.

She lost her childhood, no one else should, too.

In her college days, she remembers going to the park, where she could see kids playing. Watching kids being kids filled her with joy inside.

Their innocence was what made Chiko believe that there's always hope for the future.

She knows that people aren't born bad, but they often make bad decisions because of their circumstances.

So, to protect the world's future, she had to protect the children of the future.

She had a sketchbook, where she would often draw kids playing and being kids. Pages of pages of that, just drawings of children being happy.

Unfortunately, Chiko also knew the implications, as she's always been asked this before.

Why are you so obsessed with children?

Do you stalk kids?

Chiko... you're not... a pedophile, are you?

The word made Chiko angry.

If there's one thing that Chiko hated the most in the world. The one thing that she would not tolerate, it's pedophilia.

She doesn't want to make children miserable. She doesn't want to hurt the kids. She doesn't even want to scare the kids.

She wanted to protect them.

She just wanted to see them be happy.

Unfortunately, even her family became concerned, and sometimes, if people saw her sketchbook, or anything resembling that, they'd always come to the same conclusion.

Stalker

Pedophile

Your obsession is disgusting

These are only people who knew Chiko personally.

Chiko wanted to be around children, yes... She wanted to protect them, and she liked watching them play in the park...

...But she knows that her actions will always have implications, whether she believes it or not.

As much as she hates to admit this, she knows that the one thing preventing someone from preventing her is her gender.

As a woman, strangers don't mind if she seems to be watching children and drawing them. If she were a man, they'd immediately report her.

She looked up jobs online. A nursery school? A babysitter?

She didn't exactly want to stay in that job, but it was one way to take care of the young ones without being called weird.

It was a way to bring smiles to children without others telling you that you're just a creepy stalker.

Chiko was truly conflicted. If a child was really scared of her, she would leave them alone. She only wanted what's best for all kids. Despite what others might tell her.

As long as she can protect the smiles of the children, she'll be happy. That's all that matters.

Their transformations were cancelled.

"Aw man..." cried out Tempest.

"Apologies, but this was only a trial period. I wanted to know if you all are willing to go the extra step and become real Magical Girls. If you choose to leave, your memory will be erased and you'll be free to go. Choose to stay, and you become real Magical Girls," said the woman.

"I'm staying then!" yelled out Tempest.

"...I can't believe it. I think I can run again... I'm staying too," said Inferno.

"Me too!" said Deluge.

Well then... Looks like Chiko's made up her mind.

As a Magical Girl, she'll protect the lives of innocents, the smiles of kids around the world, and, with someone as young as Tempest in the team, she couldn't, not in good faith, just abandon her, when she knows that this might be dangerous.

She'll be a protector too.

"I choose to be a Magical Girl as well," said Chiko.

INTERLUDE

7753 heard the news.

Her boss, Pfle, had her manor attacked a few nights ago. She survived the initial attack, and the Land of Magic eventually sent reinforcements.

Unfortunately, the attacker's identity was still unknown.

The Examination Division is investigating the attacks now, and Pfle was under house arrest, for her protection.

Her manor was in ruins as well, but Pfle was safe.

Pfle was a strange boss.

She was a very capable and efficient Magical Girl. Since she was high in the Human Resources Division. However, her motives were hard to understand.

There were times where she would order something and not give any context. Her orders always seemed to end up in something working, so 7753 had learned to just trust her.

Still... her motives were difficult to understand.

Just now, 7753 had received an unsigned mail in her mailbox. One marked "OPEN" and another marked "DON'T OPEN".

She opened the one marked OPEN.

Head to this location. Talk to the person there. Give them the other envelope. Tell them to open that one.

She recognized this. This must be Pfle trying to send her a message.

7753 went over to her living room. In there was her housemate, and friend, Tepsekemei.

Tepsekemei was floating around freely, reading a book.

"Hey, Mei."

"Hello."

"How're you doing?"

"Learning. Reading. Mei wants to be smart."

"Good, good. Having any trouble?"

"...No... Maybe... No..."

7753 chuckled.

"Listen, I'm gonna be gone for a while, okay?"

Mei stopped reading.

"Will you come back?"

"Yeah. Don't worry. I'll be back."

"Okay... Mei will wait."

"There's food if you ever need it. I still have my phone, so call me if you need anything,

okay?”

“Okay. Be safe, please.”

“I will.”

7753 transformed into her Magical Girl form.

Normally, Magical Girls only transformed if they’re going to a battlefield, but in this case, it’s best to be safe.

It’s also good to leave Tepsekemei here. She didn’t want to endanger her. 7753 then travelled to the location.

She wanted to visit Mana, but Mana might not be ready for anything extreme just yet. She’s still recovering, after all.

She took the bus. Thankfully, her Magical Girl form was still explainable to humans, if a little extravagant.

The location was somewhere out of the city. An inn of sorts. She opened the door, and looked around.

The room was dark, and she saw a silhouette in the distance.

“My, my... I certainly didn’t expect to see *you* again.”

7753 felt like time had stopped completely.

That voice.

It can’t be.

The person walked forward. A hood, stars decorating it, and some horn-like shapes protruding as well.

Pythie Frederica.

“What are you doing here,” asked 7753.

“I should be asking you the same thing. I was called here,” replied Frederica.

Both were called here? Pfler had called them both here.

A cooperation?

7753 didn’t like it. Frederica was poison. Even though you’re using poison to kill your enemies, it’s still poison.

“Why don’t we take a seat,” asked Frederica as she sat down on a table.

“Fine,” replied 7753.

Frederica poured green tea on two cups and passed one to 7753. 7753 drank it reluctantly.

She used her goggles to scan Frederica.

She confirmed that her stats haven’t increased or decreased.

She confirmed that her magic was the same.

She *also* confirmed that she was under some restrictions. Wedin's promises were still in effect.

Promises: Cannot directly harm, or perform a harmful action towards 7753, Tepsekemei, and Mana.

Promises: Cannot lie to 7753, Tepsekemei, and Mana.

Promises: Cannot use her powers against 7753, Tepsekemei, and Mana.

Now 7753 understands. Pfle wants to use Frederica. She needs 7753, because that's the only way Frederica will be able to cooperate without presenting a threat.

She can't hurt 7753, nor could she lie to her.

She couldn't lie.

"Tell me, something, Frederica."

"Hmm?"

"Did you kill Wedin?"

7753 remembered that the last time she saw Wedin was with Frederica. The two of them killed Rain Pou.

But Wedin was also dead.

"I didn't kill her," said Frederica with a smile.

"You know what I'm talking about. Did you cause her death?"

"She put innocent lives before herself."

7753 stood up, and punched Frederica.

"...You deserved that."

"Ngh... Possibly. Well, then. Are you satisfied? I'm sure your boss didn't send you here to punch me."

7753 took a deep breath.

Frederica was poison.

Using Frederica was like using poison.

At the same time, during the B-City incident, 7753 also used Frederica's powers. Mana and 7753 used her as well.

What's the difference now?

7753 had no right to say that.

This was also an emergency.

Pfle's motives were hard to understand, but 7753 knows that she always had some kind of plan.

If anything happens, 7753 will be there to prevent anything from going wrong.

Now she was glad that she left Tepsekemei at home.

She slid an envelope to Frederica. "I was told to give you that. Read it. Follow it."

7753 didn't look at the contents. She was trustworthy like that.

"Promise me something, Frederica."

"Hmm? You realize you're not Wedin, right?"

"No, but you can't lie to me, so promise me something."

"Alright, then."

"Promise me you won't betray us."

"Of course!"

"Promise me you won't hurt any innocent people."

"I will care for them as much as I care for my own hair strands."

7753 sighed deeply.

"Alright... Let's get started, then."

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CHAPTER 2

THE GATHERING

☆ **Filuru**

The Magical Girl known as *Filuru* was staring at her Magical Phone. She had received an anonymous text message.

She doesn't know who the sender is, just the contents of the message.

To Filuru,

Man-Made Magical Girls are being manufactured in S-City, Japan. We have reason to believe that their facilities are there.

You're an expert at investigation. We'd like you to investigate for us.

Of course, there is a handsome sum in it for you as well.

Tell no one. You have a few days to comply. If you do not enter S-City, or if you choose to speak, then our agreement is forfeit, and magic will wipe any memory of you ever seeing this message.

A Friend

What a strange message.

Normally, Filuru would've thrown it away as trash, but as of now, she was very desperate. Desperate for cash, and desperate for a job.

The text mentioned a cash reward. Essentially, this is an under the table agreement.

If Filuru accepts, would she be violating the Land of Magic?

Then again, she has no job left, so she has a chance to earn some more money once again.

Filuru was a jailer. A Magical Girl warden, in charge of some of the Land of Magic's prisons and inmates that entered that prison.

Her office was located in the United States branch of the Land of Magic.

So far, her job was fine. Prisons in the Land of Magic rarely get broken into, and are impossible to break out of for the prisoners.

Then the B-City incident happened.

The prison in Britain was broken into by a rogue Magical Girl by the name of Tot Pop. The result of that break-in...

...Pukin and Sonia Bean escaped.

Two Magical Girls that were extremely dangerous and hard to capture, caught over a hundred years ago, escaped.

Now, if this were the only issue, Filuru might still be able to fix it, *but...*

The criminals decided, of all things, to head *inside* the B-City barrier. Once they were inside, there was no way of catching them until the barrier drops.

To make things worse, their body count was high. Most of the dead Magical Girls in B-City were attributed to being killed by Pukin or her fellow escapees somehow.

That body count included high-ranking members of Land of Magic Divisions from both Foreign Affairs *and* Examination.

That part...

...Filuru couldn't have possibly entered B-City herself. A barrier is a barrier for a reason.

Escaped prisoners.

Improperly guarded prisons.

Possibility of a traitor in the Prison staff.

All of *that* was reported over towards the Land of Magic. Filuru's higher-ups heard about the escape, one thing led to another, a meeting was called...

...and Filuru lost her job as a warden.

The Magical Girl Prison system was supposed to be unbreakable. Its process was very simple to grasp, and it was reinforced using magic built up by high-level Mages within the Land of Magic.

The prison itself is of course a solid prison. There is a structure. However, the prison is not built the same way as a normal prison.

There were magic seals that ensure the prison doesn't stay in the same place twice. At a short amount of time, these seals would need to be recharged. Only then is the prison accessible to the outside.

This is the only *hole* in the security rotation, and the Land of Magic randomizes these rotations every time.

Only the security team would have access to these knowledge times, so the only way someone like Tot Pop could even *find* the prison is from a leak.

Furthermore, the prison had a special seal inside that stopped time from flowing completely. These Magical Girls weren't allowed to die or age.

At best, they will be imprisoned forever, or until someone had a legitimate reason to pardon them. At worse, they'll go insane from the isolation. There are Magical Girls locked up for hundreds of years there.

Recently, after the breakout, the Land of Magic had a discrete meeting, that Filuru was able to get information from... sort of.

They're going to reform the prison system.

An attempt to prevent dangerous criminals from breaking free. It's a much riskier system, but may work out well in the long-run.

Instead of prison, they're aiming for a rehabilitation system. They want to give imprisoned Magical Girls time to reflect and learn. A way to reinsert them back into society. The risks involved are of course, more freedom for the prisoners, but the possible effects of Magical Girls reforming is a great cost.

Also, the one thing preventing this method from being issued before is because nothing on the scale of the B-City incident had happened before.

A prison break leading to the deaths of more than 10 Magical Girls, and a possibility of a town being nuked.

Of course, the logical blame lies on the Prison System, and of course, the Warden would take the fall.

Either way, Filuru was out of a job.

Her efforts to job hunt have led her on a wild goose chase across the Land of Magic, relying on various contacts to find opportunities.

She looked for Magical Girls residing in the United States to see if some of them actually had openings available.

She applied for various Divisions in the Land of Magic, so far either pending or rejected.

She even looked for selection test administrators, volunteering to become mentors to new Magical Girls in-training.

Alas, job hunting is nearly impossible with current events.

Returning to her apartment defeated, Filuru slumped on her couch, put on her DVD, watched TV, and decided to spend the rest of the day just sleeping it off.

That's when she received the text.

The contents of the message itself was suspicious and vague, but the draw of the money being offered might convince her to join.

At this point, Filuru is a freelancer, and she needs the money to pay for her expenses. She desperately needs a job.

However, what's all this about *Man-Made Magical Girls*? It seems suspicious. She could try and report this to the Land of Magic, but the message even states that telling this to someone forfeits her contract.

Not to mention a memory-erasing magic, which she's never even heard of. Can you even erase memories from a text message?

Filuru was inclined to not believe it, but at the same time, if it was true, then she had just lost another job opportunity.

She pondered for a long time.

She needs a job.

This was an offer.

It might be dangerous.

All Magical Girl activities are dangerous.

Filuru took a deep breath, and she made up her mind. She'll take the job.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

In the middle of the city, there was a fancy hotel. Five star, very luxurious, very well-served. Currently, the hotel is bustling with guests.

People from all over the world had gathered to the hotel. They were here to mourn a great loss to the world.

Within that hotel, a funeral was being held. A memorial service, to a woman who changed the lives of many of these people.

Everyone at the funeral had costumes that were fantastical in design. Suits, dresses, wings, horns, complex, simple.

The themes were plenty as well. Spaceman, cowboy, princess, singer, knight. A wide variety of costumes, none having a specific theme in particular.

If anyone else looked at this from a glance, it would be like a cosplay convention.

It may seem like a strange dress code for a funeral, but this was the way that the woman knew them the most.

Everyone here was a Magical Girl, and everyone here came to mourn the loss of their mentor, Mao Pam.

Mao Pam was a strong Magical Girl. Possibly the strongest of this generation of Magical Girls. She established a school called the Mao Hell Survival School, or Mao's School for short.

There, she attracted Magical Girls who were battle-hungry, and wanted a place to fight and become stronger. Mao Pam taught this school, and all of these Magical Girls, the techniques and skills she used to become strong.

These students shared her passion, and she in turn helped them fulfill theirs.

Within Mao's School, however, she doesn't tolerate extreme violence, or blood-lusted murder. Mao Pam's goal was to get stronger, and not to mindlessly kill.

For the most part, most of the students followed her philosophy. What lies in this hotel was a gathering of the strongest Magical Girls in the Land of Magic. Even ten of these girls would be able to take down a nation by sheer power alone.

However, Styler Mimi was not one of these girls. Styler Mimi wasn't part of Mao's School, despite attending the funeral.

Styler Mimi's Magical Skill,

To change the appearance of others,

was not suited for combat.

Nor does Styler Mimi want to engage in any kind of combat or fighting whatsoever. The risks far outweigh the benefits.

Mimi was invited and hired by Mao's School students themselves. When they retrieved Pam's body, it had been bloodied and stabbed through the abdomen. So, Mimi's job was to restore the body to its beautiful condition.

Mao Pam's body looked just like how Mao Pam looked before her entry into B-City. For that, the Magical Girls from Mao's School respected Mimi.

Styler Mimi took many jobs involving her powers. It's amazing how many people wish to change their appearance, even though Magical Girls are supposedly their most ideal beautiful self.

Sometimes the Magical Girl wants to change their hairstyle, or their costume. Changing hair is impossible for a Magical Girl, and a wig wouldn't survive their activities. Costume changes as well, as a Magical Girl's personal costume was tailor-made for them, making it impossible to physically change to another costume.

So, these girls went to Mimi's workshop, where Styler Mimi was able to mold their appearance into anything they wanted to.

Of course, the Magical Girls started giving donations and fees, and Styler Mimi found herself a nice little start-up job.

It's not only for vanity or personal reasons as well. Some Magical Girls need to have their appearance changed.

For the most part, Magical Girls can disguise themselves as humans if they wear the right outfit, while still remaining in Magical Girl form.

Some of them can't, however.

One of Mimi's customers had the aesthetic of an angel. She had large white feathery wings, a glowing body, and a bird's tail so large, there's no way you could hide it in the middle of a crowd.

Mimi had used her magic to make her appear human.

Why do these girls do this? Because Magical Girls occasionally have to go to enemy territory. Whether it be humans, or other rogue Magical Girls.

Magical Girls can also be targeted, and a surprise attack would kill any human.

Unlike works of fiction, in real life, no one waits for a transformation sequence. People also underestimate a Magical Girl's reaction time. They can kill you before you even touch your Magical Phone if they wanted to. So, it was always safer for Magical Girls to remain in their forms.

This job, reconstructing a corpse, was not the first time Mimi got hired for something like this. However, it was quite special, due to the corpse itself.

Mao Pam. The strongest Magical Girl.

She was one of the strongest Magical Girls within the Foreign Affairs Division, and because of that, many Mao's School Magical Girls applied for Foreign Affairs.

Within that Division, Pam's word was law. She was like God to them. Mao's School individuals can easily rise up the ranks of the Foreign Affairs Division.

Her death will break the entire hierarchy. Multiple factions will attempt to seize power in the ensuing vacuum.

People who have already created scandals due to the Cranberry incident will definitely use it to gain power and leverage within that Division. Not only that, but Mao's School might just be shut down.

Their backbone, Pam herself, is no longer here.

If you were to ask anyone who the strongest Magical Girl in Mao's School would be, it would be Mao Pam.

Mimi can already hear the whispers being given amongst the Magical Girls in the room.

"How did she die?"

"Took a job in B-City"

"The Devil shouldn't have taken that job!"

"There was a dangerous assassin. She saved us all"

"I can't believe she's gone"

"Damn, Foreign Affairs is gonna be hell. More than it was before, I mean."

"So, if we're screwed in Foreign Affairs, does that mean Examination's gonna start becoming way more confident again?"

"Nah. They lost their ace too."

"What? Exam Div's lost someone?"

"Hana Gekokujou died in B-City too."

"What? Aces are dropping left and right."

"Yeah... there's a storm coming on the horizon."

"Who's left in Exam anyways?"

"That Magical Girl Hunter."

"Who?"

"She's caught over 30 Magical Girls in the span of 3 years."

"What the hell? Is she strong? She wasn't in Mao's School."

"No clue. Personally, I don't really think she's all that."

"Who'd she catch, though?"

"Er... some people or other. Oh, she caught Flamey."

"Flamey? Damn, she's good."

"Yeah, maybe... still don't think she's all that."

For some reason, the Foreign Affairs Division and the Examination Division have a bit of rivalry going on.

Mimi already heard the news that the Examination Division sent their Investigation Team to B-City. She pretty much expected Foreign Affairs to meddle with them, creating the barrier and sending Pam.

Mimi heard a crashing noise.

She heard extreme crying in the distance. Someone was bawling in the room, and they were hitting tables and chairs as well.

A girl with a purple dress, red hair, and a large sunflower blooming on her head. Her body had a variety of tattoo like markings on them, and smaller sunflowers sprouted everywhere as well.

If you were to ask someone from Mao's School on who they hated the most, 70% would answer Marika Fukuroi.

She was expelled for being too violent and too extreme for Mao's School, yet since all members are welcome, she came here as well.

All eyes stared on her as she cried and wailed and punched tables.

She looked at everyone with a red face full of tears. Her face quickly turned to anger.

"What are you dipshits lookin' at!? Isn't this a funeral or somethin'? I'm fuckin' *sad*, okay!? Mind your own *damn business*!"

Other Magical Girls were shaking their head. One of them told them, "Someone get her out of here before she gets us all evicted."

"Who the hell is she calling a dipshit?"

"Pam should've killed her, not expelled her."

A group of Magical Girls went over to Marika and restrained her. Marika retaliated by punching and kicking them across the room.

Mimi backed away.

Other Magical Girls quickly tackled Marika to the ground. Five of them pinned her down, while one of them pummeled her face repeatedly.

When she was properly stunned, they carried her out as she struggled against the grip of multiple Magical Girls.

"LEMME GO, DAMMIT! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME-GAK!"

A punch to the stomach blew all the air out of her lungs, as the other Magical Girls escorted her away from the room.

Mimi didn't want any part of that.

If there was ever any kind of danger or trouble, it'll be with Marika Fukuroi.

Styler Mimi went home that night, and rested at her workshop. Another day, another job well done.

A knock on the door caught her attention.

She looked outside.

Marika Fukuroi.

What was she doing here?

Mimi opened the door, and saw Marika fidgeting a bit.

“Hey... Mimi, listen, uh... something weird came up...”

“Hm?”

“I got a weird text last night, and it asked me to come to S-City. Said there was somethin’ going down in there.”

“Not interested.”

“What, *why*!? They said they’re super strong Magical Girls and all that!”

“Exactly why I’m not interested. I don’t want to get into a fight. Why don’t you ask people from Mao’s School?”

“I *did*! I came to them first but no one really wanted to talk to me, so...”

“I wonder why”

“Soooo, will you come with me?”

“I’m busy with work.”

“Iiiiis that a yes?”

“What part of- WHOAAAAAAAAAGH”

Mimi was grabbed by the collar of her neck. She screamed as Marika dragged her across the street running at full speed.

“LET ME GOOOAOAAAAAAAAAAAA YOU CRAZY WOMAN!”

“What’s that? Can’t hear ya over all the screaming! Oh, no take-backsies alright?”

☆ **Lady Proud**

When it come to the Foreign Affairs Division, almost everyone can agree that Mao Pam was the superior leader.

Foreign Affairs aims to solve everything peacefully, if possible.

Mao Pam was the military leader of that Division, as sometimes, force is needed to bring peace.

Mao Pam was the ideal choice as well, as she had one of the few qualities of a powerful Magical Girl, without the qualities that would make you insane.

Before Mao Pam, Lady Proud was the previous leader of the Division.

Though she was a good leader, she was overshadowed by Mao Pam. Under Lady Proud’s rule, Foreign Affairs acted like delinquent kids. Hard to control, filled with ambitious Magical Girls.

She kept her best to try and maintain order within the Division, but when Pam came in, everything changed.

Under Mao Pam, the Foreign Affairs Division became an elite task force.

Many Mao's School Magical Girls obeyed their leader without question. They had respect to her, and her word was law.

With Pam dead, the military power of the Foreign Affairs Division will fall.

Many factions within Mao's School will try and take control of the Foreign Affairs Division. Lady Proud will have to deal with that.

With Pam dead, Lady Proud was once again reinstated as the leader of the Foreign Affairs Division.

She had a lot to take care of.

Pam's death left a mess in terms of power vacuums and personnel. Nobody would pay attention to Lady Proud.

Everyone would be too busy fighting each other.

Mao Pam's death has successfully destabilized the Foreign Affairs Division.

Add to that, there was that strange text message that Lady Proud received just last night. Although the sender was anonymous, the details of the message were quite interesting.

Man-Made Magical Girls. Who would have known?

Proud would've trashed the message, if not for the possibility of these rumors being true.

What kind of powers do these Man-Made Magical Girls possess?

Will they strengthen the Foreign Affairs Division?

Is it easy and risk-free to make them?

Is it ethical?

"I'm bored."

Proud had been so busy in her thoughts, she didn't notice that her sleeves were being tugged.

A small girl in a yellow raincoat. Green hair, a colorful sky-patterned umbrella, and large candy-like decorations dotting her coat.

This was Lady Proud's most trusted subordinate,

Umbrain.

Lady Proud trusted Umbrain with her life. If there was anyone that she would want in her back on the battlefield, it's Umbrain.

She grabbed her shoulders and stroked Umbrain's cheek with the back of her palm. All Magical Girls have soft skin, but Umbrain's felt softer to her.

Umbrain puffed her cheeks out.



“How was your day?” asked Proud.

“Boring.”

“Not to worry, I’ve just been promoted to the Foreign Affairs Division.”

“What’s that mean?”

“It means that if I’m the leader, you’re going to be my number two.”

“Number two?”

“Yes. Second-in-command! It’s a gift for enduring all these long boring hours you say you’ve had.”

“Really!? That’s so cool!”

“Mhmm. You did a good job, Umbrain. Congratulations on enduring! Now, do you mind enduring some more boring work? It’ll pay off, I promise.”

“Okay! I’ll do it to be your number two!”

Lady Proud stroked Umbrain’s hair, placing her hands underneath Umbrain’s raincoat.

Umbrain replied by smiling happily.

Proud crouched down and hugged her,

“Let’s do our best, okay?” she said to her with a smile.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

“I really don’t need this”

“Yes. You really do.”

Marika Fukuroi was one of those Magical Girls that must absolutely be transformed into human form.

There’s no way to disguise the gigantic flowers blooming on her head. It’s impossible.

So Mimi had to work her magic.

Meanwhile, Marika was trying to get a hold of someone through her Magical Phone.

“Can’t call Amy or Monaco for some reason,” said Marika.

“Perhaps they’re busy?”

“Nah, they ain’t that kinda Magical Girl”

“Then perhaps they’re ignoring you.”

“HAHA! You’re a real laugh track, y’know that?”

The loud laughter made an old man outside the building jump. He looked inside. At the sight of the two strangely dressed women, he raised his eyebrow in confusion.

Mimi simply smiled nervously and bowed down. The old man shrugged and went off on his way.

Styler Mimi knew a bit about Mao’s School and Marika Fukuroi. Most of what she got was from rumors and being hired by Mao’s School Magical Girls.

Amy and Monaco were friends with Marika, and they were all insane. They had a ‘Best Fight’ club, where they’d compare the strongest enemy they fought.

Marika’s battle-hunger was well known throughout Mao’s School. A few years ago, when

it was discovered that Cranberry had run various survival games, many Mao's School people were shocked.

"Did you hear. A Magical Girl was apparently setting up survival games."

"What, like Mao Pam?"

"No, this one's lethal."

"Who?"

"Had huge flowers around her. You know the one."

"Oh my god, Marika Fukuroi finally snapped."

"No, it's not Marika. It's Cranberry."

"*Cranberry!?* The *elf*?"

"Yeah, her."

"She was so quiet before. Damn. How is she now?"

"Dead."

"Wow. I thought Marika would've fallen off the deep end before Cranberry ever would."

Before her expulsion, Marika Fukuroi was known as *The Flower Vendor*. Mao Pam enjoyed giving titles to her students.

But Marika was too wild to control. Far too wild.

The last time anyone's heard of Marika going at her full strength was in the 36th Hell Survival Games, where she fought Cranberry herself.

At the end of the games, Marika was deemed too reckless and dangerous, and was expelled. Neither her nor Cranberry won that survival game, either.

Either way, Marika was infamous amongst Mao's School members.

"Why do I even need this?"

"Firstly, you have sunflowers blooming out of your head, and your body. Secondly, you're *technically* kidnapping me, so at least let me make sure we're safe."

"We'll be *fine*, people will forget me if they see me, anyway."

"It's not people that I'm worried about, it's the possibility of attracting other Magical Girls."

"Let 'em come! We might meet someone strong!"

"Exactly why I *won't* let them come."

"Spoilsport," said Marika as she grabbed a bottled water on the table. She didn't even bother opening the cap. Instead, she aimed it at her mouth, and crushed the bottle, squirting the water towards Mimi as well.

Mimi wiped her face as Marika sat on a chair, leaned back, placed her legs on the table,

and drank the water, with overflowing liquid dripping from her mouth.

No sense of politeness at all.

Such is Marika Fukuroi.

☆ **Filuru**

Travelling abroad is always going to be expensive, whether or not you're a Magical Girl. For Filuru, it's a long trip.

S-City was located in Japan. Filuru worked in the United States. She booked a flight there, and strengthened her mind.

It's all or nothing, now.

Either she gets paid for this job, or... she may as well be stuck in Japan forever. At least Magical Girls don't actually need to eat, right?

Upon arriving in Japan, Filuru encountered the first problem with travelling abroad.

Money exchange.

She went over and exchanged all her Dollars to Yen. Luckily enough, Filuru knows how to speak Japanese, so it shouldn't be too hard to communicate.

The only problem now is where to stay.

A business hotel would be good. But...

...Next problem.

Filuru has no clue about S-City. She needed a map.

This is going to be a long day.

After booking a stay for about a week's worth of time, Filuru began her scouting activities. She transformed into her Magical Girl form, and began jumping from rooftop to rooftop.

S-City was much denser than she expected, and Magical Girls need to be careful to not be seen by any humans while they're doing work.

Being seen by one or two was still safe, but a crowd can form memories and images.

Magical Girls exist to help people. They also exist to get rid of any troublesome things people get annoyed about. They fix broken street lamps, erase graffiti and vandalism, and even remove unwanted environmental views.

To do that, there has to be people to enjoy it, so Magical Girls tend to also save people, and go to areas with dense populations.

Filuru jumped across the skyscrapers, making a round patrol throughout S-City, before converging in the tallest building in town.

For Magical Girls to travel safely, they have two options.

Flight, which is only available to some Magical Girls.

Rooftop parkour, the most basic way to travel. At night, the Magical Girls will come out, travel across rooftops, and watch over people from above.

You'd be amazed how many people don't actually look up when they're walking around. It wasn't like that in the States, doesn't seem to be like that in Japan, either.

Filuru opened both her palms. On each finger, a sparkling thread had been sown.

To others, both humans and Magical Girls, this thread is invisible. To Filuru, she sees a shiny sparkling thin thread.

Filuru's Magical Skill,

To sew anything with her magical needle and thread.

She's able to sew through almost any surface. Her threads can sew through concrete if she wanted to as well.

Also, the threads don't actually do damage, and so Filuru can sew threads in each finger without hurting herself in any way.

The threads are also durable. Despite its thin shape, it's capable of restraining a Magical Girl. In fact, as a Warden, this was Filuru's preferred method of restraint.

Its property of being invisible to all but Filuru allows her to set booby traps throughout the prisons she guards, and Magical Girl prisoners always had a hard time actually figuring out an escape plan against her.

In the city, she tied 10 threads throughout the whole of S-City. Each thread corresponds to a finger with Filuru.

Each thread had been sewn throughout a quadrant. Sliced like a pizza, or a spider's web.

The threads were tied to rooftops, over and underneath the ceilings. This way, she had 10 distinct sectors she can watch over.

If anything in these rooftops move faster than a human, the threads will vibrate, alerting Filuru to a sector where a Magical Girl may be.

Now all that's left to do is wait.

30 minutes have passed.

Filuru was used to waiting. This was her job as a Warden. All she did was wait for some action and she got paid.

Truth be told, that was a wonderful job.

But trapping is waiting. You can't spring a trap by yourself. You have to let your prey walk into said traps.

And so, Filuru waited.

3 hours have passed.

Looks like today is no luck. That's okay. Filuru is used to the waiting game. She'll have to

try again tomorrow night.

Filuru can't use this method in the morning, because in the morning, sometimes cleaners and other humans come up to the roof to do activities.

It was at night where Magical Girls would usually use the rooftops for transport.

She walked over to each quadrant and gathered up the pieces of threads that she's sown, and she began unsewing them.

In the mornings, she tended to lie down and relax on her hotel, and watch her morning Drama shows.

She does this because she believes that it's important for distractions to occupy a Magical Girl's brains, as during the night, she's going to be highly focused on waiting for these Man-Made Magical Girls.

Morning.

Filuru watched her drama. The drama was about a love triangle between the main heroine, her workmates, and the lives of everyone else around her. The setting was a hospital. It was pretty popular in America.

Night.

Filuru waited. Nothing much happened tonight. Perhaps next time.

Morning.

Filuru went to the post office. She found a way to gain more extra cash, but only for a bit. It's possible she can extend the stay at her hotel, but she can't force it.

In the drama, a doctor's wife suddenly appears on the show. She was mentioned a lot, but had never actually shown up. A famous actress is portraying her. Filuru wondered if she was going to be recurring or just a special guest.

She went to an online board about the show, and she posted her comments and her theories anonymously.

Night.

Again. Nothing happened. Filuru had considered waiting till the morning for this, but she knows that Magical Girls will be harder to detect in the morning, since people will be busy and active then.

Morning.

In the drama, the main heroine has apparently been killed off. Filuru thought this was a shocking development. She couldn't wait for the next episode, and she got really angry when they ended it on a cliffhanger.

Night.

Patterns are repeating again.

Filuru began wondering if maybe she was doing something wrong. She can't keep doing this. It feels like she was throwing fish bait to an empty pond.

Firstly, are Man-Made Magical Girls even the same as normal Magical Girls?

Filuru had laid her traps on the assumption that Man-Made Magical Girls operate on the same level as a normal Magical Girl. Helping people, jumping on rooftops, etc.

What if they were being studied in a lab?

What if her assumption was wrong?

She can't keep doing the same thing if it doesn't produce results. Her stay at the hotel was going to end soon, and she can't afford enough to keep extending her stay.

She sighed, and decided to do the more active way of hunting.

She wished there was a fight. A fight would certainly keep her brain exercised, and not bored.

She wondered if that one doctor who broke up recently is going to cause problems for the potentially new main character. That drama was on her mind a lot.

So many thoughts, so little time.

☆ **Prism Cherry**

Being together with the Pure Elements has been a blast so far.

Fighting the Disruptors as a team has allowed Cherry to shine alongside her teammates. Although still not as strong as them, Cherry was able to improve some of her skills.

Just a bit more, she thinks, and she might be able to stand out.

She's still not sure what these Disruptors actually are, though.

So far, they seem to appear in places that aren't populated by humans. For example, forests and quarries.

Especially quarries, high in the mountains.

They like to just show up there.

What's with these monsters and fighting in quarries?

Cherry believed that if she could somehow pinpoint the locations that the Disruptors came from, she can predict where they'd come next.

She marked every location they've ever fought in, and realized that most of them only ever appeared outside of S-City.

Cherry was relieved, for if she encountered them alone, she'd probably die.

"What're you up to?" asked Princess Inferno suddenly.

Cherry got startled.

"Ehehe, just mapping out Disruptor appearances."

“Hmm? What for?”

“I figured there might be a pattern. We could find out where they might appear before they appear, y’know?”

“What for? We already have an alert system, and we’re pretty fast.”

“Well, I figured we could learn a lot about them. For example, they seem to show up outside of S-City’s borders.”

“That’s good. Let’s hope they keep it that way. What do you think, Quake?”

Princess Quake was quietly sketching in the corner.

“You drawing a map, too?” chuckled Inferno as she asked.

Quake glanced at both of them, “Huh? Oh, nono, I’m just uh... sketching Disruptors.”

“What is *with* you two. Is there a Disruptor fan club I’m missing?” said Inferno while laughing.

“I’m just making a record of our adventures is all,” said Quake.

“In your sketchbook?”

“Yes, Inferno. In my sketchbook. I do draw.”

“Do you have us in it?”

“I uh... I do, actually.”

“Is there me?”

“...Yes?”

“Can I see it?”

“No.”

“Whaaat? Why not?”

“It’s not ready.”

“Oh, come on, Quake!”

“I’m serious! You can’t just ask an artist to show you their work in progress! It... doesn’t work like that.”

“Don’t they livestream drawings online sometimes.”

“Well... Everyone’s different! Besides, it’s time for medicine, right?”

“Wow, saved by medicine. Who knew.”

Prism Cherry had noticed this too, but the Pure Elements always seem to take prescribed medicine every few days.

Cherry had asked this question to Quake before, and according to her, the medicine helps their body stabilize as Magical Girls.

Cherry was slightly confused about it, but she didn’t ask further.

Inferno and Quake swallowed some pills. Inferno then asked Quake, “By the way, Deluge and Tempest aren’t back, are they?”

“Still on collection duty,” said Quake, silently sketching.

Inferno grinned, and she slowly took a peek at Quake.

“Wha-HEY! Off!”

“Whaat? C’mon, I wanna see what I look like in your sketchbook!”

“OFF!”

Inferno laughed, Quake’s face red with embarrassment.

Cherry smiled. Why couldn’t these guys have been selected for the tests? Cherry would like friends like these. She’d like them very much.

☆ **Princess Deluge**

Disruptors don’t die easily.

Well, that’s not accurate.

Disruptors die easily, but they don’t disappear easily.

After a battle, the Disruptors’ corpse will take a few days before they break down and melt into some strange remains.

Afterwards, the Pure Elements often go back on collection missions, in order to collect the Disruptor bodies, reverse engineer them, and give new gadgets and powers to themselves.

During the first few days, all of the Pure Elements would be on collection missions. Later on, they realized that there’s really no danger of Disruptors ambushing them so far, so they downgraded to two Elements at a time.

The way to decide who will go is via a game that they decide to play.

Tempest always loses, so Deluge actually felt bad, and played badly in the latest game on purpose in order to make Tempest be on third place.

Despite still losing to the other two, Tempest was happy that she beat Deluge.

Tempest was young. An elementary school girl. She’s still brash and impulsive. The least Deluge could do was give her some sense of victory.

“So, Deluge. I was thinkin... Maybe next time, we play a game that *I* choose!”

“I wouldn’t mind.”

“Maybe I can actually win. My luck’s turning around y’know?”

“What game are you thinking about?”

“Shogi!”

“S-Shogi? They teach Shogi in elementary?”

“Yeah! It’s all the rage now! Some classmates brought this Manga about a boy and his family, playing Shogi and stuff. Everyone started to read it. I kinda got interested, too!”

“Well, that’s nice. Do you know how to play?”

“I uh... know what order to put the pieces in!” said Tempest while grinning.

“Ah... well... that’s useful! What’s your favorite opener?”

“Uh... The one where it makes... your opponent... not move?”

She has absolutely no idea what she’s talking about.

“Well, I look forward to playing it! I’m not good at Shogi, but I’ll try!”

“Awesome!”

“Wait a minute, Tempest. Shh. You hear that?”

Deluge heard a happy yelp. Somewhere on the roof as well. Around the corner. She had no idea where it came from exactly, but she knew it was nearby.

Tempest looked around, “What’s up?”

“There’s a voice...”

Deluge listened in closely. She looked around, carefully, until...

A girl with a white dress, purple hair, braided, and a bunch of knitted threads all around her. Yarn and string everywhere.

The girl looked beautiful and out of this world. She had a strange cap on her head, and it feels like every part of her was knitted.

“YEES! I FOUND YOU! NOW I CAN PAY MY HOTEL FEE!”

What?

“Who are you?” asked Deluge.

“Not important. The question is, who exactly are-”

“My, my. Looks like she did the work for us.”

The knitting girl was interrupted by the voice of another girl. Deluge looked up in the sky. There were two other girls similar to her, but different as well.

One had a veil on her, as well as dark butterfly wings. The other was floating down on the inside of a bubble, wearing overalls, and carrying a trumpet of some kind.

Are these Magical Girls?

They don’t have Princess tiaras. Are they like Prism Cherry?

“So there are the Man-Made Magical Girls. Interesting that they seem to have a theme,” said the overalls girl, popping her bubble.

“I do have to thank you for tracking them, though. A shame that we have to take care of it from here,” continued the veil girl, talking to the knitting girl.

The knitting girl was surprised.

“W-Wait, who are *you* two? You can’t just monopolize this, I found them first!”

“Isn’t that what Freelancers do? Get hired to find something, and then the one who gets the job done gets paid,” said overalls girl.

“Perhaps you’re new to Freelancing, but we’ll take it from here,” said veil girl.

The three girls were arguing amongst each other. Man-Made Magical Girls? Freelancers? Are these Magical Girls?

Deluge and Tempest took a glance at each other and nodded.



“Luxury Mode, On!”

A bright light shone as Princess Deluge and Tempest felt a surge of power surge through their body, their gems glowing ever brighter.

Luxury Mode, an upgrade that they recently got, allowed them to power up for a limited amount of time, once per day.

This gave them enhanced strength, speed, jumping power, and reflexes, making them nigh unstoppable.

“I’ve got weeping angel, you get bubbles!” said Tempest.

Tempest zoomed in and headbutted the veil girl. The veil girl was knocked back towards the other building, crashing through the glass, and Tempest charged inside as well.

Deluge ran straight for the overalls girl and launched a high kick that sent the overalls girl flying high in the air.

Deluge followed up with a high jump, trident at the ready, aimed at the girl. The overalls girl blew something from her trumpet.

Now that Deluge thinks about it, that’s not a trumpet at all. That’s more like a bubble straw, as a large bubble headed straight for Deluge.

She wasn’t expecting the bubble to be as hard as it did, when she rammed into it, as the bubble sent her crashing back down to the rooftop.

Meanwhile, the bubble girl had encased herself in a large bubble, jumping from bubble to bubble in an attempt to safely land back.

She had blown a straight line of bubbles aimed straight at Deluge.

The bubbles flew in fast, as Deluge popped each one with her trident, one by one. However, the barrage of bubbles became even more overwhelming.

Deluge began jumping on the bubbles, and the slippery parts of it eventually made her slip inside the bubble itself.

Deluge was trapped.

But suddenly, a boomerang came out of the building. The overalls girl sensed it and ducked, but the boomerang was aimed at Deluge’s bubble, not the overalls girl.

The bubble popped, and Deluge was free again.

She could only catch her breath for a second, as she sensed an incoming kick, which she blocked with left palm.

The shockwave of that kick made her left arm completely numb.

It was the knitting girl. She had this much strength?

Deluge was lucky that she was in Luxury Mode to begin with. She began her counterattack with her trident.

The knitting girl’s reflexes were fast, and she began swinging a yarn ball tied to a string, avoiding Deluge’s thrusts and kicks.

Despite it being yarn, for some reason it hit with the strength of a Magical Girl. Deluge avoided the yarn, sometimes blocking it with her trident.

The force of that yarn was enough to vibrate her trident on impact.

She can’t outfight those reflexes, and Luxury Mode is about to run out. Deluge had to think fast. She waited for the yarn ball to come towards her, and...

...She stabbed it with part of her trident.

Got it!

It may be a strong yarn ball, but it's still made of yarn, and there are still holes where the trident can pierce through.

Just then, a large bubble, with overalls inside of it, came charging at Deluge.

With the yarn stuck on her trident, Deluge jumped and performed a sideflip, letting the momentum of the trident drag the knitting girl into the air.

She narrowly avoided the bubble, and used her trident to forcefully pop it, as overalls started to lose control and skid across the building.

At the same time, she used the momentum of her flip to throw the yarn away from the trident, sending knitting girl flying as well, all while successfully pulling off the landing.

Now facing overalls recovering from the attack, Deluge charged at her, but overalls blew a ton of small bubbles that forced Deluge back. She used her wrist to cover her face as the bubbles began to cover her.

When she opened her eyes, they were gone.

"They got away?"

Deluge looked around. They weren't in sight.

Tempest flew from the building ahead, confused at where the others went.

"They're gone!"

Who were they?

☆ **Princess Inferno**

"Yes, it was an ambush," said Deluge.

"There were three people! All of them wore different clothes! One was like a weird veiled lady, the other was all casual with bubbles, and another one had a bunch of yarn in her!" said Tempest quickly.

"Whoa... slow down, what happened?" asked Quake.

Deluge placed her hands on her hips.

"Three Magical Girls attacked us, claimed to be looking for Man-Made Magical Girls, and went after us. I think they're trying to kill us."

"Were you followed?" asked Quake.

"No. Tempest said she didn't see anyone on the way back."

"Were they Magical Girls? You're sure?" asked Quake again.

"Yes, but not like us. They don't have the Princess gems or anything like that."

Inferno was curious. Strong enemies like that seemed to be fun to fight. She was a bit disappointed that she didn't get to meet them.

“Now I kinda wished that I took that collection mission,” said Inferno.

“This isn’t a laughing matter, Inferno. We need to find out who these girls are,” said Quake.

Inferno glanced to the side.

Prism Cherry was nervously in the corner, looking less talkative than before. She seemed to be avoiding them for some reason.

“Maybe Cherry knows?” suggested Inferno.

All eyes were on Prism Cherry.

She nervously looked at all four of them.

“I-I don’t know anyone by your descriptions.”

“You sure? If you know something, you should tell us, Cherry,” urged Quake.

Cherry nodded, but maintained that she didn’t know who these mysterious Magical Girls are.

Quake sighed,

“Either way, it’s late. We should head back, and discuss this some other time. Stay safe, okay?”

Everyone nodded.

Tempest approached Inferno.

“So, hey, Aka-Nee-San, we’re going off to a party next month. You coming?” she asked eagerly.

“I might. It’s Finals Week next month, so I’m not sure if I’m free.”

“Oh... Gotcha. Welp, guess it can’t be helped,” said Tempest happily.

Deluge left with Cherry, Tempest flew home. Quake stayed behind a bit to lock up, and Inferno went back home as well.

☆ **Princess Quake**

Back at campus, Chiko slumped at her chair.

After about an hour of figuring out just what was going on, she decided to just take a small break and begin her favorite hobby.

Drawing and sketching.

She took out her sketchbook from her closet, and she sat down on her chair.

It was late at night, and it was dark as well. She needs light to actually sketch. She turned on her lamp, but as soon as it did, it flickered, turned really bright, and broke.

Chiko took a deep breath.

“Princess Mode, On.”

She transformed into Princess Quake, granting her night vision.

She grabbed her pencil and began drawing on her sketchbook.

She tried to draw the three strange Magical Girls based on Tempest's quick descriptions of them, though she doubted that they're accurate.

However, she did draw Deluge and Tempest fighting them as well, as best as she imagined they can.

She spent hours drawing until she thought it was perfect. She had to sharpen her pencil twice as well.

On the next page, she wrote a note to herself.

Get fake sketchbook to show Inferno.

Inferno had asked to see her sketchbook earlier in the day, and Quake couldn't share it to her.

Most of what Quake said is true. She did sketch the Disruptors and the Pure Elements.

She's been sketching their adventures every time they go out and do them. She's planning to make them like a classic manga.

She drew them in their pose.

Of course, there were plenty of self-portraits of Quake herself, and that much was embarrassing to show Inferno.

However, what she really didn't want Inferno to see was the pages upon pages of drawings of children playing in the park.

There was plenty of them, and whenever someone saw just how often and how many times Quake drew them, they always seem to come to the same conclusion.

Those words that they say will always haunt her.

She didn't want Inferno to think of her that way.

She wanted the Pure Elements to stick together as a team. So she'll make sure that she puts them before anything else.

That's what a protector is for, right?

☆ **Princess Tempest**

Home at last.

What a wonderful day that was. A nice plot development for the Pure Elements!

After spending week after weeks of fighting Disruptors, their monster of the week, getting upgrades, new powers, and even their sixth ranger, it was time for the latest story beat to hit the stage.

Mysterious enemies!

The real bad guys begin to show up!

Strange Magical Girls that they've never met before? How will this tie in to the Disruptors? What do they want with the Pure Elements?

Just thinking about it made Tempest giddy with excitement. She felt like she was actually living in a Magical Girl Anime.

Of course, it was also scary. Those Magical Girls were stronger than she initially expected. She actually had to fight hard when fighting them.

But the heroes always win in the end, and the Pure Elements were chosen for a reason!

Besides, she's got something to look forward to.

Akari's not going to be coming to the party that she's planning to attend next month.

It's a birthday party, and Sho's invited.

That means her plan can work!

Finally, it's gonna pay off!

She prayed, she got excited, and she even started looking for perfumes that would supposedly 'make you irresistible' online.

She couldn't sleep that night, due to thinking about how next month will go.

She'll transform into Tempest, change into middle school-looking clothes, introduce herself to Sho, and then they'll start hanging out, and fall in love, and...

She can't wait.

If those Magical Girls attack her during the party, she might even be able to save the day, fighting off the bad guys.

In the process, she'll reveal her identity to Sho. Sho will be shocked, Tempest will go,

"This is my life. The truth is... I'm a Pure Element! If we're together, it might endanger your life!"

"Mei, you saved everyone's life here. I'm grateful for that. I'll stand by you."

Tears will flow, they'll hug, and...

And...

Tempest shrieked in joy.

She was happy. She couldn't believe that she got a chance to be a Magical Girl.

That night, Princess Tempest slept with a smile on her face.

☆ **Princess Deluge**

Princess Deluge escorted Cherry back to her house. Once she made sure that she was safe inside, she parted ways, and ran all the way back to hers.

She couldn't stop thinking of those three Magical Girls.

What's a Man-Made Magical Girl?

Why do they not look like the Princesses?

Was there something Prism Cherry is hiding?

Deluge had begun to notice a pattern. Those three Magical Girls seemed to have unique clothing, but didn't have tiaras.

Same like Prism Cherry.

Those girls didn't seem to have any kind of modes or powers that were similar to the Princesses.

And, just looking at Cherry, there are some strange things going on.

Prism Cherry didn't have to consume medicine every now and then to remain a Magical Girl.

Prism Cherry didn't transform with a gem.

The first few questions that Deluge asked to Cherry confused her, as if this wasn't normal in the first place.

To add to that, whenever Prism Cherry faced the Disruptors, although she wasn't as strong as the Princesses, she showed no fear, and always took charge in fighting them as well.

However, when they were talking about the three attackers, she was shuddering in a corner.

Were the Pure Elements the odd ones out?

Deluge reached her apartment, and transformed back into Nami Aoki.

If Prism Cherry knew about these three, how would the other girls react?

Quake, Inferno, and Tempest would probably abandon her immediately. They don't know her as much as Deluge did.

But Deluge trusted Cherry.

If Prism Cherry was exiled from the Pure Elements, Deluge would stick with Cherry all the way through.

She's decided. Tomorrow, she'll talk to Cherry.

☆ **Prism Cherry**

She knew this would happen.

She anticipated this.

Prism Cherry expected the Land of Magic to come, sooner or later. She just wasn't prepared for this.

At school, all she could think about was the whole situation.

Were the Pure Elements going to get arrested? How illegal is this? They didn't pass any selection test. Was this kind of like illegal immigration?

Would they get their powers removed? Would it kill them?

...Would the Land of Magic erase their memories?

Sakura didn't want to lose her friends. She finally found a family that considered her just as special as they are.

She didn't want to lose that at all.

During recess, Nami approached her.

Nami Aoki, Princess Deluge.

"Hey, Sakura"

"Hey."

"I wanted to talk to you for a bit, if that's okay."

"Sure. That's fine."

"It's... about yesterday."

Sakura's heart beat rapidly. She was worried. What was Nami going to say? Was she going to confront her? She knew she should've just told them about this whole Land of Magic thing and-

"Sakura... whatever happens, you'll be on our side, right?"

Huh?

Nami didn't look angry.

Instead, she looked like she was pleading.

This was a call for help. A friend asking another friend to stand by her. Sakura had never thought that she'd be depended on like this.

She wanted her whole life, for someone to appreciate her and believe that she's more than just an average girl.

Now she's found a close friend, and family who appreciates her.

The Land of Magic... or the Pure Elements...

Sakura made her decision.

"I'll always stand by your side, Nami. No matter what happens."

Nami smiled. Sakura could see that she was prepared to cry, but she smiled, and hugged Sakura.

"Thank you. Thank you so much," said Nami.

Sakura returned the hug,

"I know I'm not... as strong as you guys. I'm trying. I'm working so hard so that I can be equal. But I don't care what happens. I'm standing with you no matter what."

"Let me help you with that, okay, Sakura? You'll get there. You're still family. You probably don't realize it, but we do consider you our equal, y'know?"

"Really?"

“Yeah. We’re the Pure Elements. We stick together!”

Those words made Sakura happy.

The bell rang.

“Oh, well... Thanks for the talk, Sakura. See you after school?”

“Yeah. See you!”

Nami ran towards class.

Sakura was happy. She’ll strive hard to be as physically capable as her new family. She’ll become a Pure Element. She’ll stand by them, always.

☆ **Filuru**

A hotel isn’t the best place for a meeting, but there’s really no other place left.

Besides, the two other girls paid for an extension, so at least that gave them some time to stay.

There were only two couches on the room, so Filuru had to use her bed to sit down, while the other two Magical Girls were in the chair.

“So... *Who* are you two, and why did you have to go ruin the whole thing?” asked Filuru, slightly grumpy.

“My, I don’t think you were doing too well yourself. We all lost, let’s face it. At least we understand what the enemy’s capable of,” said the overalls girl.

“Though I do have to say, you seem to be quite new to Freelancing, don’t you think?” said the veil girl.

“Freelancing? What are you talking about? I came here because of a text!” said Filuru.

“So did we, except it was a job. We’re Freelancers,” said overalls.

“Land of Magic can’t just send their Divisions to do the small things, so sometimes unemployed Magical Girls like us take the jobs that they don’t have time for. Freelancers. Something which *you* seem to be new at,” said veil girl.

Filuru gulped.

These people were jobless too?

She didn’t want to admit that she was looking for a job as well.

“Either way, introductions are in place. My name is Uttakatta,” said overalls.

“And I am Kafuria,” said veil girl.

“Oh, I’m Filuru.”

“A pleasure to meet you all. Now then, I suggest we have an alliance,” said Uttakatta.

“That would be preferable. An alliance would benefit everyone greatly, don’t you think?” said Kafuria.

Filuru looked at the two, dumbfounded.

She massaged her head, “Okay... Okay, fine. Let’s have an alliance to settle this job. But wait... you’re telling me that I wasn’t the only one that got the text?”

“Nope. It was sent to a lot of people, apparently. Probably not just us, either,” said Uttakatta.

Filuru thought for a moment. Man-Made Magical Girls sure are an interesting topic. It would make sense for the Land of Magic to send multiple parties to find out more about them.

“Alright. If we’re working together, we should know our powers. I can sew things. As in, I can sew on anything. Walls, dirt, skin, anything.”

“Interesting... That can be very useful. Mine is to blow unique bubbles. I can control the bubbles however much I want,” said Uttakatta.

“And I know who dies next,” said Kafuria.

Filuru and Uttakatta looked at Kafuria with a shocked expression.

Uttakatta began chuckling, “What an interesting power. So, you can tell us which one of us will die next?”

“I can’t tell the time or cause of death. But give me a group, and I will know who dies next, yes. It could be 50 years, it could be in the next 3 minutes.”

“So humor me, Kafuria. Which one of us will die first?” asked Uttakatta.

Kafuria grinned.

“Not me. That’s the only thing that matters.”

Filuru’s heartbeat raced a bit upon hearing that.

Meanwhile, Uttakatta laughed, “Well, you never know what kind of Magical Girl you’ll run into next, hmm?”

Filuru calmed down a bit. Kafuria didn’t say that ‘dies next’ means ‘dies soon’.

“If we’re talking about plans, we should first find out where these Man-Made Magical Girls head towards. Obviously, they have a base of operations,” said Uttakatta as she pulled out an S-City map.

She circled a location, the area where they had their skirmish.

Then she drew a line with an arrow.

“After the fight, they ran in this direction, so we can assume that their base is somewhere in that side of the city,” said Uttakatta.

Kafuria looked at Filuru, “How did you find them?”

“Oh. I set up threads and strings around the rooftops of the city. Once I felt a vibration that told me that there were things running faster than a human, I checked up on it, and I found them,” said Filuru.

“Ah, a clever tracker. Your skills will be useful,” said Uttakatta.

“And it looks like your bubbles can be useful for a lot of things too. Now, disregarding

Kafuria's abilities, we should figure out how we can use our powers better in a fight, right?" asked Filuru.

"Discounting my abilities? My, how rude," said Kafuria.

"A-Ah, I didn't mean it like that! I just meant that we can't exactly have combat potential by knowing who dies first," said Filuru, apologizing with a red face.

Kafuria then stood up, "You're forgetting something, ladies."

She spread out her large black wings, stretching out across the room.

"I can fly. I'm the fastest out of all three of you when it comes to scouting."

"That's great! That means you can find out where those Man-Made Magical Girls hide. You can soar from the sky, get a bird's eye view, and figure out where they are, right?" said Filuru.

"Indeed, I can."

"Look for abandoned buildings. If I'm not mistaken, their facility should be underground," said Uttakatta.

"Why do you say that?" asked Filuru.

"Because for a Magical Girl to properly hold a base in a building, it'd either have to be abandoned, where people won't stumble into them, or underground, where people won't see them. Either way, look for abandoned buildings as a start. It should narrow the search," said Uttakatta.

Kafuria nodded. Filuru also nodded.

With that, a strange, albeit convenient alliance was formed amongst the Freelancers.

INTERLUDE

☆ **Pythie Frederica**

Pythie had never thought that she'd meet 7753 again so soon. Then again, she didn't expect a lot of things to happen during the B-City Incident.

Pythie's strength is adapting, after all.

Now, she has to work together with a peculiar girl, Pfle.

Pfle's motives were a mystery to Pythie, and I'm sure she'd prefer it that way. However, Pythie had other ways to find out more.

If Pythie lets herself in the alliance without any info like this, she'll be at a disadvantage.

Pfle sent 7753 after her because Pythie can't directly harm 7753. That's fine, but nothing in Wedin's promise said anything about anyone other than 7753.

Pythie Frederica's apprentice was Keek. In the days since her escape from B-City, she had already visited all her previous apprentice's homes, and collected any data from them.

Wiping Keek's memory of Pythie means that she wouldn't have anticipated Pythie to come visit her. Not like she could stop her, since she doesn't seem to be here.

What Pythie does know is that Snow White was sent towards Keek. If only Pythie could see that.

Pythie pulled up Keek's reports and files, a game that she ran in her own cyber world, which had Pfle as a participant.

Pfle

Magical Skill: A fast wheelchair

The more Pythie read about Pfle, the more Pythie knew about her tendencies, her plans...
...Her weaknesses.

Pythie and Pfle may be similar to outsiders, at a glance, but Pfle wants people to think she's untouchable.

Pythie is different in that she has no weaknesses. Nothing can be used as leverage against her.

Pfle seems to have plenty.

Pfle, to outsiders, also looks like an emotionless machine, incapable of feeling for others. However, the more Pythie looked at what Pfle had done in the cyber game, the more Pythie understood how Pfle's mind worked.

She is definitely not emotionless. She definitely has a cause, and she definitely also has an emotional pressure point.

Know thy enemy. The importance of knowledge, even if you're working together with them.

Pythie fantasized a scenario.

If Pfle encountered Snow White...

...Pythie smiled at the thought.

She then snapped herself out of it.

Pythie's ideal Magical Girl is Snow White. Pfle does not fit her ideal, nobody else fits her ideal as well.

One of these days, she will meet Snow White again.

Pythie opened the envelope that Pfle had entrusted her with. Inside it was a file.

Magical Girl Raising Project.

She began to open the files. It contained details and data about a process in creating Man-Made Magical Girls.

A way to create Magical Girls without going through the process of the Land of Magic.

The process used Fairy magic, but at the same time, it was somehow extracted and changed, so that it didn't require fairies.

More possibilities to customize the Magical Girl, the ability to create better Magical Girls, without the need for possible weaknesses or flaws.

The process was first founded by a Fairy, in fact...

...Toko?

My, my.

Notes of Toko figuring out a process to create Man-Made Magical Girls. Experimenting with her own magic.

Finding someone to help her infiltrate the Land of Magic to find out secrets, and ways to bypass them.

And then...

...Contact information between Pfle and Toko, with Pfle hiring her in order to be given the information needed in how to create Man-Made Magical Girls. A deal that involved Pfle's assistant, Shadow Gale, being able to create the necessary tools needed.

Notes on how to perfect the formula, blueprints, tests, data on perfecting the formula so that it doesn't blow up in your face.

Pfle's been working on this project for a while, in secret, it seems...

But wait...

Further on in the file, it seems that these are plans. Drafts of the proposals, drafts of releases.

Pfle isn't trying to monopolize the technology.

She's planning to spread it.

She wants to share the ability to create Man-Made Magical Girls?

Why? Ah, of course...

So the Land of Magic won't have a chance to forbid her from doing it...

Her manor was attacked because she knew about this information. Someone didn't want that to be shared.

If the world knew about how to create Man-Made Magical Girls, there would be no way for anyone within the Land of Magic to create Man-Made Magical Girls on their own.

In this way, the Land of Magic won't be able to stop the progress of the technology.

Pythie flipped the pages, there were detailed instructions on what to do. Pythie smiled as she saw each entry.

If Pythie just had the complete tools and information necessary to create these Man-Made Magical Girls...

...Pythie could create an Ideal Magical Girl...

Her head began to hurt. At some point, she was thinking about how to defeat her opponents, and 7753 flashed through her mind.

At that moment, the door opened.

A girl with one arm and one eye, and a ninja suit appeared.

Ripple.

“I’m home,” she said with a smile.

“How was your day?”

“It was great!” said Ripple with a joyful face.

“Wonderful! Would you like to have some tea?” asked Pythie.

“I’d love to,” said Ripple happily, sitting down as Pythie poured her a cup.

CHAPTER 3

A MIRACULOUS MEETING

☆ Prism Cherry

After training, the Pure Elements always had a small breaktime.

During this break, they were free to do whatever they wished. Often, they'd try and do whatever they wished. After all, combat training is rough stuff.

Quake was playing with her handheld gaming device, out in the corner of the room.

Inferno was reading a Shounen battle Manga.

Deluge was watching a comedy Anime on TV.

Tempest, however, was doing some homework. Besides her, Prism Cherry was helping her. It was a math homework, and Tempest was slightly struggling.

Tempest had a series of questions to answer, and Cherry had a formula sheet on her hand as well. If Tempest needed help, Cherry would let her know which formula to use.

It's been a while since Cherry actually did elementary school problems, but it was still easy enough that Cherry remembered what they were.

Tempest was stuck on a problem.

"I don't get it. I added everything up, it's right. I know it's right! I double-checked it. So why's it say it's wrong in the answer key?" asked Tempest with a pouted face.

"Lemme see what you did," said Cherry.

Tempest nodded and passed her worksheet.

Cherry looked up Tempest's paper. It was filled with lots of scribbles and eraser marks of calculations all over the paper.

"Ah, I see what you're doing. You're not following PEMDAS," said Cherry.

"Wha? What's that?" asked Tempest.

"You multiply first, *then* you add. Not the other way around. Multiply it by ten, *then* add by five. Even though five comes first."

Cherry passed it back to Tempest. She took a look at the question and redid the equation. Afterwards, she found the answer, and it was the correct one.

"Oh my gosh! You're a genius, Cherry! Yes!" shouted Tempest eagerly.

She erased her wrong equations furiously and blew out the dust from the eraser bits.

"Alright, next question, let's *go*!" said Tempest.

This was nice.

Cherry never had any siblings, but if she did, she'd like to think that this is what it felt like. The Pure Elements were like a family, even if they weren't related by blood.

Even though they weren't even related by how they became Magical Girls, they're still her family.

"Y'know, I wish Cherry was the oldest of all of us, then she could help me with my college work, too," mentioned Quake on the side, grabbing a bottle of pills and swallowing one of them.

"Cherry's a good girl. She likes helping people in general," said Deluge, still keeping her eyes on the Anime she's watching.

Prism Cherry felt a bit flattered getting these compliments, but this is the least she could do for someone who took her in.

"Well, I won't need any studying help, at least. I actually can manage on my own, thank you very much!" said Inferno smugly.

"Oooh, so that's why you're always taking those make-up tests, huh, Inferno?" said Tempest with a chuckle.

Inferno turned around to Tempest with an embarrassed look on her face,

"W-Where'd you even get *that* info from?"

"Your sister told me," said Tempest, tongue sticking out.

"They weren't *make-up tests*!"

"So you just stayed after school to take *more* tests? You sure?" said Tempest, becoming even more playful.

"Y-YEAH! I just... *loooove* taking all those tests! That's what makes me smart y'know! You'll understand when you're older, we just *love* taking tests and whatnot!"

"No we don't," said Quake from the corner, snickering.

"You're not *helping*..." muttered Inferno.

"Ahahahaa!"

Tempest laughed hard at the scene happening before her eyes. She laughed so hard that she began shaking in her chair.

When suddenly...

Snap!

Her pencil broke.

The strength of a Magical Girl is huge, so if you're mindlessly gripping something, you might accidentally break it if you're not careful.

"Aww, dangit! Anyone got a spare?" asked Tempest.

Deluge shook her head.

Inferno shrugged.

Quake also shook her head.

Cherry merely scratched her head and grinned, as if she's saying, *sorry, no dice*.

"Wait, Quake. You're drawing, can't I borrow your pencil?"

"This is a drawing pencil, Tempest. It's not going to do well in a regular paper homework. It's best if you use a regular writing pencil."

Tempest took a deep breath and began floating in the air.

"Alright then, I've got some spares at home, so I'll just head back and be right on back! Cherry, you're not going home early, are you?"

"Huh? No, of course not," said Cherry.

"Awesome! Help me out with my homework, then let's do something fun together, alright?" said Tempest.

"Tick tock, better hurry. Breaktime might be over by the time you get baaack," said Inferno with a smile.

"I'm the fastest of all the Pure Elements. I'll be back in no time!" said Tempest as she zoomed out towards the exit.

Times like this, Prism Cherry was glad to be part of the Pure Elements.

She had almost forgotten about the Land of Magic beginning to investigate them. She knew that they were coming, but she felt like maybe, there's a chance that they might just be safe out here.

Either way, she hoped that Tempest wouldn't be reckless. A Pure Element may be strong, but what makes them invincible is their teamwork. They're like family.

Together, they could defeat anything.

☆ **Lady Proud**

As a Magical Girl, your senses are increased. More than a human could ever hope to achieve. As a Magical Girl, your eyesight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. All of it is enhanced.

Furthermore, as a Magical Girl, often, the kind of Magical Girl you transform into will give you a unique skill as well.

This isn't the powers that you're granted, but rather, Magical Girl transformations can sometimes affect a person's biology.

There exists Magical Girls with the biology of wooden puppets, or those with the biology of a robot. A Magical Girl's traits may also change based on her transformation.

It makes sense, since a Magical Girl's transformation affects their body and mentality. You're much calmer as a Magical Girl. Stress doesn't affect you as much as it does for a human.

Your brain and heart are more stable, and stronger, meaning you don't get scared as easy. Of course, the side effects include these extra 'traits' that a Magical Girl may have every

once in a while.

For instance, Lady Proud is a lot keener in her ability to smell out blood.

She can differentiate between the blood of individuals if she concentrated far enough, and if she knew the person.

She can even detect faint traces of blood, or dry blood.

This isn't her Magical Skill, it's just a side effect of her Magical Girl form, a batlike vampiric looking creature.

The blood of a Magical Girl and the blood of a human is different. As a Magical Girl, your *everything* is enhanced, so it's stronger.

It's hard to explain, but the smell, the taste, it's different. Those who bleed as a Magical Girl are much more different than the blood that's bled from humans.

Proud decided to go on that first. There were faint traces of Magical Girl blood smell, carried by the wind, throughout S-City.

Faint, but it's there.

Means that a battle had occurred, and that Magical Girls were involved. From this, Proud can conclude that there may be more than one Magical Girl that she'll have to deal with.

She focused on the scent. There was a newer one. She decided to follow it.

Best case scenario, she finds one of these Man-Made Magical Girls, and she can take her in for questioning.

If she doesn't find a Man-Made one, she'll probably encounter whoever it is had a battle recently. Maybe a Magical Girl in charge of this city.

Either way, following the blood was a good idea.

Lady Proud was very slow.

It was important not to lose the trail, but she had to concentrate to keep up. Occasionally, she'd speed up, but when she's near a busy place, she had to pinpoint where the blood came from, and where it's going.

Eventually, she got to her destination.

Some kind of abandoned factory.

The doors seemed to be locked, but it's not something that a Magical Girl would have problems breaking.

But if it *was* broken, then there should've been signs.

The only explanation is that they either used some other entrance, or they were allowed entry by someone else.

"Are we there yet?" asked Umbrain, rather impatient with the long walk, when Magical Girls can definitely travel faster.

"The blood leads here, we might have our answers soon," said Lady Proud.

Umbrain may not look like much, and could definitely be a little childish, but she's the only person that Proud trusts in a combat situation.

Lady Proud circled around the back of the building. Afterwards, she found an unused entrance that she can enter.

The factory was abandoned, and it looks like even the skylight was slightly broken. The smell of blood was fresh here, though. The blood of having just finished a battle.

Lady Proud looked around. She was never very good at investigation missions. She's better at leading and politics. However, she wasn't afraid to get her hands dirty if she needed to. She took a long look around the facility.

There were flyers and papers pasted along the walls, mostly advertisements and motivation posters.

What was really interesting however, is the fact that the floor seems not as dusty as she expected, meaning that someone clearly took care of this place.

The message had mentioned a facility, or a lab, but she had no idea if this is what they meant. This looks more like an abandoned building than any facility that she knew of.

Then again, perhaps the building was hiding something.

Lady Proud glanced back, Umbrain was staring at something in the corner.

"Find anything?" asked Proud.

"Mm, not really," replied Umbrain.

"What are you looking at?"

"A spider's web."

"Spider's web? Why?"

"Some rain must've fallen here some time ago. It dripped on the web. When it sparkles with water, it's kinda pretty," said Umbrain as she stared intently at the sparkling webs.

Proud closed her eyes, smiled, and shook her head.

She continued onwards, now inspecting the other rooms besides the main ones. The staff locker rooms, the restrooms, the meeting rooms.

Nothing. No sign of anything.

No switch, no hidden room, no secret passage. What's worse, the blood seems to stop here, so she knows she's definitely in the right place.

Umbrain followed Proud, and after minutes of searching, they decided to take a small break.

They sat down on the floor, figuring out what to do next.

The one problem with this mission is that Lady Proud can't actually contact other Magical Girls for help. The message specifically stated that no one else can be told, and that only Proud and Umbrain can enter S-City to find the Man-Made Magical Girls.

If she had help from the other departments, she probably could search much faster. She

wasn't a tracker.

Besides, the Foreign Affairs Division isn't really suited for these search and capture missions. That's something the Examination Division's better at doing.

Proud can't ignore the request, however, simply because it had something she was curious about, also the fact that the threat of memory wiping might be real.

While she knows the Land of Magic is capable of memory erasure, she's never heard of one being done through a phone before.

Then she heard a noise.

Some kind of scraping sound.

It came from the main room.

Proud and Umbrain rushed out there, and what they saw on the ground was a hole of some kind, being opened up.

From the hole, popped the head of a girl.

Blonde hair, apple-like ornaments around it, laurel leaves surrounding her, and a Princess Tiara.

"Huh? Who's she?" asked Umbrain.

Magical Girl.

The girl pointed at Lady Proud, "AAAH! NOT YOU GUYS AGAIN!"

You guys?

Again?

She then began to float and pointed at Umbrain, "Just how many of you *are there!*?"

Proud noticed someone else's presence. Sitting on the beams of the ceiling, was another girl, dressed in another fancy outfit.

A two-sided mask, like those worn in a masquerade. Black and white, each displaying closed eyes in a crescent shape. One was pointed up, with a tear on the left side of the girl's face. Only her mouth and nose were visible.

Her outfit was best described as that of a jester, or a clown.

Another Magical Girl?

The clown Magical Girl seemed to be covering her mouth with both hands, miming a shocked expression, not that they could see her eyes.

Her legs were both swinging one at a time as she sat on the beams.

"Wait, we're not your enemies!" said Proud to the flying princess.

"Oooh, no no no! I'm not falling for *that* after what happened!" she said as she prepared what seemed like a bladed weapon.

The princess threw the weapon, but didn't throw it directly at Proud. Instead, it twirled like some kind of boomerang, creating large amounts of winds as it flew around the

factory.

However, that boomerang was still headed towards Proud, and it seemed to slice anything in its way.

“GET BACK!” said Umbrain, as she pushed Proud behind her, and opened her umbrella widely to block the boomerang.

Umbrain’s Magical Skill is her umbrella,

To catch everything softly with her umbrella

Anything that touches that umbrella, no matter how fast it travels, or how heavy it is, will hit it as if it was only softly tapping it.

In this way, the umbrella can act as a shield.

The boomerang hit the umbrella with a *Thoomp* and fell to the ground, losing all momentum.

Umbrain closed her umbrella and looked up. There, the clown Magical Girl was waving goodbye whimsically to the two of them, as she exited the building by jumping out of the skylight.

“Ngh, did they run?” asked Proud, standing up from the ground.

“They ran,” nodded Umbrain.

Well, at least there’s *some* progress.

☆ **Fal**

This is the 3rd time Snow White has circled S-City.

She seriously needs to take a break.

Snow White jumped through buildings, landed on street signs, took a quick glance, then jumped back on those buildings again.

She knows the city inside-out now, still searching for signs of these Man-Made Magical Girls, still focused on her job.

Fal had only heard of her during Cranberry’s tests, how she would always work day and night to help people as a Magical Girl.

To see that determination now, but focused on a different path, is quite scary.

Snow White paused at the tip of the highest rooftop.

“Fal, who’s in charge here?”

Snow White was asking about the local Magical Girl. Normally, Magical Girls would be assigned districts to watch over.

Fal was supposed to be discarded, so he didn’t exactly have full access to the updated Land of Magic database, but what he did have was Keek’s skills.

Keek had hacked into the Land of Magic database to find information on all of

Cranberry's test selections, as well as a few other things.

It took a little time for it to update, since it always has to bypass lots of security, so it would probably lag by a few weeks or so. Still, Fal could probably find out the local Magical Girl of S-City.

"Let's see... the local Magical Girl of this district is... Prism Cherry, Pon! It looks like she's in charge of... Oh my, all of S-City, Pon!"

"I see. We haven't seen her yet. We'll just keep looking."

Without even pausing, Snow White continued on with her speedy patrol.

Most Magical Girls don't move like her on patrol. She was moving fast, making a lot of noise, not bothering to stay far away from humans.

Snow White's being uncharacteristically reckless in her patrol.

She's probably trying to attract the attention of the local Magical Girl, who never came.

"You're moving pretty boldly, Pon."

"You're opinions are getting bolder as well, Fal."

"Like master like mascot, Pon?"

"It's not the first time I've moved as fast as this."

"Yeah, you move like this if you're trying to draw attention to yourself, Pon."

"I've got enough attention on me as it is."

"You haven't exactly done anything to prevent that, Pon!"

"Why should I?"

"It worries me, the notoriety you're getting, Pon! I know you're just using yourself as bait to catch rogue Magical Girls, Pon!"

"If you want to fish, you're not going to get anything unless your bait is worth eating. Larger fish needs better bait."

"...But what if you fish a whale, Pon? What if the fish drags you into the ocean with them, Pon?"

"Who says I'll lose to the whale?"

"...And *this* is why I'm worried, Pon."

Suddenly, Fal felt something in his scanner. He kept it on at all times, but it only worked on a 100-meter range.

A short ping. Moving super-fast. Headed towards Snow White. Impossible speed.

Before Fal could even say anything, Snow White had already rolled out of the way, and stood up in a position to defend herself.

Fal took a look at the assailant.

Clad in a purple dress, eyes fiery wild, large flowers on her head.

She was lowering her posture, like a racer preparing to dash forward, grinning happily at her opponent.

“You dodged my attack! Nice!” said the flower girl.

Fal looked at their surroundings. The rooftop they were in was surrounded by what appears to be chain-linked fences, and a wide opening.

Fal quickly scanned the database for anyone looking like flower girl.

“You even have a mascot character! That means you’re actually worth somethin’!”

Found it!

“Snow White, be careful, she’s-”

“Snow White!? *You’re* the Magical Girl Hunter? Oh, this day just keeps getting better and better!” said the flower girl.

Fal ignored her and continued on.

“Marika Fukuroi! She’s trained by Mao Pam, part of the Mao’s School, known for being ultra-violent, prone to attacks, expelled from the school itself...”

“Wait, what the hell’s that fish mascot doing and what’s his name?” asked Marika.

“...after being expelled, she decided to mess around in the human world, Pon! She went to South America and removed all of the drug cartels for fun, Pon...”

“Are you reading off my Résumé, or somethin’? Besides, that was a fun game of hide and seek!”

“...then she went to South Africa and single-handedly stopped a civil war, just because she wanted to fight tanks, Pon...”

“I thought they’d be *fun*!”

“...She went to the Middle East and stopped a conflict by beating both sides into submission, Pon...”

“Seriously, I feel like I’m in a job interview here, WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?”

“...Her Magical Skill is *To bloom magical flowers on her head*, Pon!”

“Okay, when you put it like that, it sounds stupid.”

Snow White didn’t move, didn’t flinch, and didn’t show any expression at all. Fal was nervous. This Marika person is dangerous, based on her records.

Though, it seems like she unintentionally helped the world by trying to pick fights with people willing to pick fights.

“Alright Snow White, now that fishboy’s stopped talking, let’s get to the *real* show...” she said with a grin.

“WAIT! EVERYBODY PLEASE STOP WHAT YOU’RE DOING!” yelled another voice from a distance.

Fal was so focused on finding out about Marika that he hadn’t realized that another

Magical Girl had entered the field.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

Marika bolted out of her sight so fast that she didn't have time to catch up.

Apparently, Marika had detected the presence of another Magical Girl jumping around town, and immediately bolted out of sight.

She's such a bother to deal with.

Finally, she caught up with Marika, and it looked like she was preparing to attack another Magical Girl.

Mimi knew about Marika's tendencies. When she meets a new Magical Girl for the first time, the first thing she does is attack them.

If they get hit, Marika won't bother fighting them. If they avoid it, they have the right to fight Marika. Marika Fukuroi only respects strength, and dodging her surprise attacks is the first condition to earning Marika's respect.

Of course, when your first impression of someone is being attacked by them, it doesn't actually make for a good first impression.

"Mimi? What the hell you doin' followin' me for?"

"You... practically *dragged* me out here, and you're asking that question?"

"I mean I'm kinda in the middle of somethin' here!"

"You mean you're about to engage in *another* reckless, pointless fight with another random Magical Girl?"

Styler Mimi got a good look at Marika's opponent.

A Magical Girl clad in white. A middle school uniform. Long socks extending to shoes, a headband of flowers, as well as white flowers blooming on her side.

She also had a small satchel bag with a star symbol on it, which didn't seem to be a part of her costume. That bag must be a Magical Item, though Mimi can't quite remember the purpose just by glancing at it.

Strangely enough, the girl's clothing betrays her expressions and mannerisms.



While she looks like a middle school sailor suit Magical Girl, the girl in front of Mimi looks more like a battle-hardened combat veteran.

She didn't flinch, her pose was natural, there were no signs of any weak spots, or if there were, she didn't show them.

Furthermore, her white clothing seems to be rugged and dirty, which means she's been

transformed for quite a while.

Normally, Magical Girl outfits would become clean once you transform out of it and transform again, but of course, while you're wearing it, it acts like any other outfit.

This girl's been moving a lot, fighting a lot, and has stayed in Magical Girl form for quite a while.

"Styler Mimi, Pon!"

A small electronic childlike voice popped out of that girl's bag.

Cyber Fairy? Those things are still being used?

"She doesn't have any recent history of fighting, but she's acquainted with Marika, Pon!"

Oh, great, he's digging through Mimi's history.

The white Magical Girl took a step forward, and looked at Marika and Mimi.

"I have no intention of fighting you," said Snow White.

"What!?" said Marika dumbfounded.

"You heard me. I don't fight unless I need to fight. If I ever need to fight, I'll make sure you won't be able to fight back. So for now, I don't intend on fighting."

"What the hell's *that* supposed to mean? I attacked you, that's reason enough to fight me!"

"That's not how I work," replied the white Magical Girl.

"You call yourself the Magical Girl Hunter but you're not even willing to *fight*!?"

...Magical Girl Hunter?

Oh no.

Of all the people Marika chose to piss off, why'd it have to be *her*.

Now Mimi recognized the outfit. The sailor suit, the middle-school looking white dress. She'd heard of the Magical Girl Hunter, but she didn't pay much attention to remember her face.

If this was the Magical Girl Hunter,

"Marika, I don't think this is a fight you wa-"

"Oh, I *know* this is a fight I want, Mimi! In fact, this is *the* fight I want! Tell me, Snow White, how was Flamey? Were you satisfied with fighting her? If I were you, I sure as hell wouldn't!"

The Hunter didn't respond.

"I heard the stories about you. I hear about everyone who's strong. You took down a lot of my old classmates, and I'm impressed."

Again, silence from the Hunter.

"Did you ever get to fight Cranberry? I know she's dead now, but did you?"

"Marika..."

Mimi knew a bit about the Hunter. She knew she's one of the Children of Cranberry, originating from her tests, but never killing anyone.

Mimi was worried that something that Marika would say could trigger an emotional response from the Hunter, but the Hunter was as stoic as ever.

"I have, y'know. One of the best fights I've had in a long time. Three hours. We fought till our bones broke, until we couldn't move. Cause as long as we could move, we wouldn't stop. You able to give me that kinda fight?"

The Hunter took one step forward.

"Not. Fighting you." She said firmly.

Clap Clap Clap Clap!

Mimi heard clapping coming from somewhere.

Then she saw a strange sight. Just outside the chainlink fences on the roof, was a clown Magical Girl balancing herself on steel stilts.

☆ **Fal**

That's strange.

Fal didn't detect the clown Magical Girl at all. She just... suddenly appeared, like out of thin air. However, this was definitely a Magical Girl.

Normally, no matter how fast a Magical Girl is, like Marika, Fal would be able to detect even a small ping before they came in range.

This clown seemed like she's an anomaly.

She was balancing herself on steel stilts, and then she did a front-flip, landing on top of the chainlink fence with one leg, before taking a bow and balancing with the other leg.

Such expert movements. Magical Girls may be great at agility, but this clown had impressive balancing skills, which would take at least months to master for a Magical Girl.

Marika whistled, impressed at the clown, while holding her hands to her hips.

Fal tried to search the database but found nothing.

A new Magical Girl? Impossible, the skills she had needs her to have trained for months. She's not new, but if she's a veteran, she has to have an entry.

In disguise? Fal looked at Magical Girls that specialized in disguising themselves.

No match.

Maybe illegal? Unlisted? Fal looked at Keek's database, there were a list of Magical Girls and fairies that tended to create illegal Magical Girls, unregistered with the Land of Magic.

No match.

Fal looked at the database of news reports from the Land of Magic.

Fairy creates Magical Girl out of pity...

No. Not the clown.

...Magical Girl sightings unrecorded by Land of Magic...

Nope. Not the clown.

...B-City cleanup reveals evidence that Rain Pou created possibly 5 or more unregistered Magical Girl without consent. Investigation team being reached out for comment...

None of them were the clown.

Who was this clown?

Clap!

The clown clapped her hands, covered in long sleeves, and from her hands, suddenly came some juggling balls, which she juggled around while balancing on the chain-linked fence.

She caught each ball, clapped, and it disappeared.

She covered her mouth with her right arm and mimicked giggling. She then proceeded to jump high across the fences, opening her arms wildly, and jumping whimsically, as if she's just another happy clown.

She began making gestures, dancing and prancing as she jumped along.

Finally, she stopped, placed a finger on her mouth, tilted her head, acted like she was confused.

Marika seemed impressed, "She caught me off-guard..." she murmured to herself.

"Hey clownie, I'm interested. What's your deal," asked Marika.

Then, she pointed backwards, and waved goodbye.

The clown backflipped to the street, landed on a street lamp, and began running and jumping away.

"Hey, *get back here!* I'm not done askin' questions yet!"

Marika jumped after the clown. Mimi seemed even more upset, and followed Marika without hesitation.

Fal and Snow were alone again.

"I couldn't find that girl, Pon..."

"Neither could I."

"Pon?"

"I don't know why, but she slipped past me as well. She had no fear of anything. No worries. No distress. She had nothing."

Fal became even more worried.

"Marika, when she was about to hit me, she was worried that I'd get hit. She wanted someone she can fight with, so she didn't want me to get hit. I heard her fear, that's how I

knew she was sneaking up on me. That's why I didn't fight her, because she didn't have any evil intentions, but the clown..."

"What about the clown, Pon?"

"There was nothing there. When she jumped down, she wasn't worried that she'll slip. When she backflipped, she wasn't even nervous that she'd miss a step. I can't read her..."

Fal couldn't tell what Snow White was feeling at the moment, because her expression is always stoic.

Snow White never showed any expressions, and just like a Cyber Fairy, who always smiles, Snow White is always stoic, despite what she might feel inside.

Fal can only hope that things are okay inside her mind.

☆ **Prism Cherry**

"Quake, I know your pencil's a lot better for drawing, but can't you just spare your pencil for Tempest?" asked Inferno.

"No, because it's a drawing pencil, it's not meant for writing."

"Why?"

"Because... it's a *drawing* pencil."

"It's still a pencil, right?"

"No it is not *just* a pencil, Inferno. They're completely different. One's for sketching, the other's for writing!"

"Still don't really get it, but okay... Oh, that reminds me. Quake, you still haven't shown me your sketchbook!"

"Er... about that."

"C'mooooon, lemme see your drawings!"

Just afterwards, Tempest came crashing into the room.

"Tempest!? You okay?" asked Cherry.

Tempest was the fastest Pure Element, but she shouldn't be *that* fast when travelling to her house and back.

Did she really want to get back before break time's over?

"Whoa, slow down there, Tempest. You can still get some rest, don't worry!" said Deluge from the side.

Tempest got up and had both her hands in her hair,

"Oh man, oh man, oh man, oh man..." she said, breathing heavily.

"Hey, what's up? Calm down, Tempest," said Chery, holding her shoulder. Tempest began to slow her breathing down.

"Guys... we're in big trouble! There's *more*!" said Tempest.

“More? More what?” asked Quake.

“More of those weird Magical Girls! I found more of them! The three that me and Deluge fought weren’t the only ones!”

Prism Cherry’s heart sank. All the Princesses sprung up to action, curious about what Tempest was saying.

“Tempest, what’d you see?” asked Inferno.

“Okay... so what I saw was-”

An alarm began blaring, interrupting Tempest mid-speech.

Normally, the alarm was used to alert the Pure Elements to when Disruptors would appear, however, this time, the alarm was to alert that there are intruders entering their base.

The monitor displayed two Magical Girls.

One with long flowing red hair, horns, and a cloak. The other was a short, green-haired girl, with a raincoat and umbrella.

“AAAAH! THOSE GUYS ARE THE ONES!” said Tempest.

“Wait, they’re in our *base*?” asked Quake.

“Er... Ehehe, yeah, but it’s not my fault! I didn’t lead them back here or anything! They were here when I first saw them, honest!” said Tempest.

“Well, at least they can’t enter the base, even if they go to the basement, right?” said Inferno shrugging.

This time it was Deluge that laughed nervously.

“Ehehe, about that... They probably could.”

“What? What do you mean? The base is password-protected. None of us could break through the door.” asked Quake.

“I... may... probably... kinda sorta... just... *haven’t* set a password, just maybe kinda sorta y’know?” muttered Deluge.

“Deluge. You had one job,” said Quake sighing.

“It was such a *pain*, you had to come up with a password, then you had to re-type it, then it told me that you needed special characters, a number, there’s just so many things, I didn’t bother cause we were never in danger before, sorry...”

“Well, we’re in danger *now*! So we’ll have a talk about this later. Either way, we have to come up with a plan now. Pure Elements, you’re with us, right?”

“Definitely!”

“Together till the end!”

“We’re family, after all”

Prism Cherry was nervous.

The day had finally come. Those Magical Girls were from the Land of Magic. They were

probably experts as well.

Cherry wasn't good at fighting. This isn't her being unconfident about her fighting abilities, this was a fact that she's accepted.

She thought that with enough training, she could help her family out in the heat of battle, but she's still not a match for veteran Magical Girls.

Furthermore, she's possibly committing a crime by sheltering illegal Magical Girls.

But the Pure Elements have done nothing wrong. There are those in the Land of Magic who are corrupt.

The Pure Elements are innocent. There are those in the Land of Magic who's caused deaths.

The Pure Elements accepted her, for better or worse. In the Land of Magic, she's going to be tried, possibly put in jail, even if she explains everything.

But most importantly, the Pure Elements were her family, and family bonds are the strongest, blood related or not.

Prism Cherry was different from the Pure Elements, in every possible way. She wasn't even a Man-Made Magical Girl like them, but they still treated her as part of their family.

So, through thick and thin, Prism Cherry will stick by her family.

Prism Cherry is a Pure Element.

She'll stand by them, no matter what the circumstances.

The Pure Elements were looking straight at her, and Cherry smiled in response,

"I've got your back, guys. We're the Pure Elements, right?"

"Alright!" said Tempest.

"Let's show those girls who's boss!" said Inferno.

"Thanks, Cherry. We appreciate it," said Deluge warmly.

"Alright, who's gonna fight who? I say *ladies first*, so Inferno should probably take first turn, right?" said Tempest.

"L-Ladies first doesn't work when we're *all* ladies here!" said Inferno.

"Alright, calm down. They're invading us in our home turf, so we need a plan," said Quake as she headed towards the monitors.

Cherry's heart couldn't stop beating, but this was really happening.

☆ **Fal**

Tracking down the clown Magical Girl wasn't hard. She was still jumping around the city, being chased by Marika and Mimi.

Marika was quick and reckless, so even if Snow White couldn't track the clown, she could track Marika's movements.

Eventually, Snow White caught up with them, still chasing after the clown Magical Girl. She adjusted her speed to match Styler Mimi.

Mimi glanced over at Snow White, who looked back with a look that said *I'm not here to fight*.

"Your name, it was, Miss Snow White, wasn't it?" said Mimi.

"Snow White is fine, or just Snow. I don't do formalities," said Snow White.

"Alright, Snow. Look, I'm really sorry about what happened earlier. Marika can be a little... out of touch with how people work."

"It's alright. I know she doesn't mean any ill will," said Snow White, still jumping along neon signs and lamp posts.

"I wanted to ask you something, Styler Mimi."

"Mimi's fine, and of course."

"Did you come here because you received a strange text message?"

"Well, *I* didn't, but *she* did," said Mimi, pointing at Marika, who was chasing the clown. The clown hooked herself and always seemed to do some prancing or stylish maneuvers in the air.

"Oh, then why'd you come?" asked Snow.

"Marika... dragged me into this, kind of."

Marika and Styler Mimi had some former relationship, according to Fal's database. What that relationship was, he doesn't know.

Mimi doesn't seem like she truly objected to Marika dragging her along. Based on her history, she can definitely handle herself in a fight.

So Mimi's doing this not based on fear or anything like that, she probably accepted being dragged by Marika. Maybe she wanted to protect her.

Maybe she was like Ripple, to Snow White.

The thought of Ripple still made Fal nervous and guilty inside. The text message doesn't prove that Ripple was alive, only that her Magical Phone was still there.

Someone else could be using it, after all. There were so many unknowns about the B-City incident, that nobody really knew what happened in the middle of the whole event.

The clown Magical Girl approached a facility, and entered it from the rooftop skylight.

When Marika, Mimi, and Snow White landed on the rooftop of that facility, for some reason, their combined weight destroyed their part of the rooftop, sending them falling inside.

Fal knew it. It was a trap!

He increased his signal, two more Magical Girls in front of Snow White, Marika, and Mimi, who were still on the ground standing up.

The beeping noise on Snow White's Magical Phone signaled how many Magical Girls

there are and where they are.

Snow White glanced at Fal,

“Fal, quiet it down. It’s okay, it’s not a trap.”

“Pon?”

“I can read their mind, they’re not here to ambush us. Don’t worry,” said Snow White.

Perhaps Fal was being too paranoid.

But now comes the other question of just who the other two are.

Looking up the database, Fal recognized the two as Lady Proud and Umbrain, of the Foreign Affairs Division.

Foreign Affairs Magical Girls excelled at combat, and this is no exception. Lady Proud and Umbrain were partners, relying on each other for fighting.

But they’re not the type to go in to investigate, that’s the Examination Division’s job. They’re supposed to be handling inter-divisional and human-based problems.

Man-Made Magical Girls are illegal Magical Girls, not something Foreign Affairs should be handling.

Fal was lost.

He couldn’t be of any help, because scanning an ally would probably be considered a betrayal. He doesn’t know what’s going on, because he couldn’t find the clown in the database.

Fal was lost.

He simply watched from Snow’s bag, hoping that he’s still useful in some way.

“More and more keep showing up, huh?” said Lady Proud to the three.

Snow White stood calmly.

Marika wanted to move to attack, but Mimi grabbed her neck.

The clown jumped down between the two groups. She looked at the both of them, looking left at Snow’s group, then right at Proud’s group.

Then she hopped in her spot and clapped rapidly, making exaggerated happy gestures.

She pranced over to Snow White, moving her face close to hers, and tilting her head while putting her index finger over her chin, mimicking curiosity.

The clown speaks in exaggerated miming.

The clown then offered her hand, as if waiting for a handshake.

Snow replied by grabbing her hand.

The clown shook her hands up and down very highly, like it was a cartoon character, all while smiling.

Then, she hugged Snow White tightly, lifting her up in her hug, while raising one leg

backwards, like an exaggerated cartoon hug.

Afterwards, she placed her right hand on her mouth, lightly chuckling.

She moved on to Styler Mimi, and shook her hand as well, hugging her too afterwards.

Afterwards, she headed over to Marika, but while prancing there, she mimed a surprise look, and then she began miming a sneaking movement.

She slowly pointed an index finger, and sloooowly move it towards Marika's face, like those cartoon characters that would go, *what if I touch this?*

Marika responded with a growl and a bite, which the clown dodged.

The clown then shook and mimed an exaggerated *I'm scared* movement, with her hands flailing in the air.

She then placed her right hand on her mouth and chuckled lightly.

Clap!

She clapped her hands together, and when she released them, business cards showed up in her palm.

She shuffled them together and passed them to each Magical Girl.

On the card, it read,

Nice to meet you! I'm Stuntchica!

All the Magical Girls looked at Stuntchica, as she waved her hands at all of them.

"Stuntchica... That's your name?" asked Lady Proud.

Stuntchica nodded furiously.

Snow White looked at Stuntchica, then at Proud and Umbrain.

"You brought us here for a reason, right? You want us to ally, not fight each other."

Stuntchica raised both thumbs up and nodded furiously.

"Then I presume introductions are in order. I am Lady Proud, and this is my assistant and partner, Umbrain."

Stuntchica pranced over to Lady Proud, and she did an exaggerated jester's bow, she went over to Umbrain, and she crouched down and patted her head.

Umbrain seemed to like that.

"Snow White. That's Styler Mimi, and this is Marika Fukuroi."

"There'd better be a good reason for us to not be fighting right now, though, Stuntchica," said Marika, holding both her hands to her hips.

Stuntchica only chuckled.

☆ Princess Quake

Never in her whole life would Chiko Saitou believe that she would be transformed into a

Magical Girl.

The world of dreams and magic.

A Magical Girl, was not only real, but she'd been plunged into it as well.

It's been weeks since she first became a Pure Element. In that time, she's bonded with her newfound family.

As a college student, she didn't have time for friends or a social life. Most of her time was spent on doing schoolwork, or things related to finding a job.

The only friends she made weren't really friends, more like classmates. Sure, they talked, but once they're no longer in the class, they rarely ever meet.

A, B and C are really close with Chiko. They talk so much in Math class.

After math class, Chiko didn't seem like she talked too much with A, B and C. What happened?

Well, they weren't really the same kind of friends that you'd call close.

Chiko's close friends were the Pure Elements. It's quite miraculous, really, how they met each other.

She remembered when they first transformed. The ones that were the most excited when being shown their base was Tempest and Inferno.

Tempest was a young girl, so she was easily excitable by cool things like this.

Inferno was older, but she was a child at heart. She easily had that child spirit that secret bases seemed really cool to her.

Professor Tanaka told them that the research facility was to figure out more about how Magical Girls worked.

She told them that Disruptors would invade. Black creatures that posed threats to humanity, and that the Pure Elements were there to stop them.

The research facility was grand. Outside, it looked like an abandoned factory, but inside, under the basement, it was a true research facility.

Clean, high-tech walls, as well as training facilities to support all of the Pure Elements.

There were four training facilities, each modeled after a specific biome on earth.

You can view each training area through the main control room, where they were right now. Of course, you can also enter and exit the training room yourself.

Two hallways branched out from the basement entrance, the left side leads to training rooms 1 and 2, and the right side leads to training rooms 3 and 4.

The branches will soon lead back again straight towards the briefing room.

Professor Tanaka told them not to let any intruders in the base. Now, their family paradise was being invaded.

Chiko felt like it was fate that each Pure Element came from a different part of life.

Tempest was from elementary.

Deluge was middle school.

Inferno was in high school.

And Quake was in college.

As the eldest, Chiko was unofficially the leader of the Pure Elements. She wondered if other Magical Girls had this kind of seniority.

The images she saw on the monitor increased. Now there was a schoolgirl, a flower, and a stylist. There was no sense of unity, unlike the Pure Elements.

She wondered if those Magical Girls were the outcasts, or if the Pure Elements were the outcasts. Prism Cherry seems to belong with the other batch.

But Cherry was one of them, and Cherry said she'll fight with them, and that reassured Quake.

Now, for the plan.

"Cherry, stay in the briefing room, alright? There's master controls over there. This facility is ours, and they're fighting on our terms. You're not as good as us at fighting, but you can be the most useful there," said Quake.

Cherry nodded.

"As for the rest of us, we'll split up into two groups. Not all of us have Luxury Mode available today, so be careful. Deluge and I will take training rooms 1 and 2, Inferno, you're with Tempest. Handle training rooms 3 and 4,"

All of them nodded.

"Safety first. First sign of trouble, you retreat. We don't want to fight, we want to stop them from going in, got it? Okay, let's go!"

Time is of the essence. They have to trap the intruders and stop them from advancing.

☆ **Fal**

The underground entrance was dark. Way too dark for a human to function. The ladder was smooth, however, which means it's been used often.

Magical Girls and Cyber Fairies had no problems in the dark, of course.

The secret entrance slid back to a close as soon as the girls all entered.

Meanwhile, a large door seemed to block the girls' entrance, with a keypad on the wall. Was it password-protected?

No, never mind, Stuntchica opened it without a hitch.

She clapped and from her palms came three throwing knives.

Effortlessly, she began juggling the knives together. This must be her combat weapon, and she must be preparing it.

The whimsical nature of Stuntchica seemed mysterious to Fal. Even after revealing her name, Fal couldn't find her in the database.

Meanwhile, Umbrain was clapping at Stuntchica's daring knife-juggling performance.

Stuntchica glanced happily at Umbrain, like a clown trying to cheer up a young child.

Snow White led the way. It was dark, but Magical Girls don't need any kind of light source. Their eyes can adjust easily.

Snow White took out her halberd from her 4-D bag.

Ruler.

Named after one of the participants of her test, this halberd is a strange one. It looks like a halberd, but the blade doesn't look like one. Instead, it looks more like a machete blade.

Either way, it's a weapon, and a Magical Item. It possesses a unique trait of being completely unbreakable, even when under attack by Magical Girls.

She led the way.

Snow White's magic was perfect for leading the way, since she can detect any ambushes being set up by other Magical Girls.

She also had Fal.

Snow White can't detect artificial traps, as they have no mind to read. That was Fal's job. He can detect anything within 100 meters, thanks to Keek's modifications.

Still, Fal had to tell Snow White something.

"I've lost signal with the outside, Pon."

"Me too," said Snow White.

"Pon?"

"I can't hear anyone outside the basement. My magic only works on the people inside the building. We'll have to be careful."

Fal was nervous, but Snow White showed no expression as always.

Eventually, they reached what seemed to be a crossroads. A large hallway, separating into two different hallways.

"Huh, what are the chances that they go in completely different ways?" asked Marika.

"We split up," said Snow White.

"Not to misjudge you, Snow, but isn't that the first thing we shouldn't do?" nudged Mimi.

"There are a few reasons why we're splitting up. One, we can cover a lot of ground that way. We don't know if these hallways lead further to two parts of the facility, or if they lead back and rejoin each other. Two, we're all veterans, right? We can handle ourselves just fine," said Snow White.

She was right. Almost everyone in here were either Land of Magic veterans, or really good fighters in general.

“Very well, then. Let’s set our groups. Umbrain and I will go with Snow White. Marika, Mimi, and Stuntchica will group up,” said Proud as she and Umbrain walked over to Snow White.

“Regroup when you see any trouble. Regroup anyway after 15 minutes back here. We need to always stick together,” said Snow White.

The others nodded, and the two groups separated.

☆ **Filuru**

They spent hours searching abandoned houses and facilities to no avail.

Filuru had almost given up entirely, but Kafuria and Uttakatta must’ve had more experience doing this.

“If you give up this easily, you’re not set for the Freelancer life,” said Uttakatta.

Filuru had to admit, this was the first time she’s actually been unemployed and doing this, so she just had to follow the experts, it seems.

She finally reached a factory looking place. This one looks a bit more promising.

Uttakatta was already on the grass, looking and scanning the ground for something. She quickly scoured the area.

Filuru didn’t understand what they were doing at first, but she didn’t have to, since Uttakatta immediately stood up again.

“Found it,” she said.

“Good. How many?” asked Kafuria.

“Three. Young girls.”

Filuru was confused. These two were talking about something she had no idea about. She looked up at them.

“What’s going on?” she asked.

Uttakatta pointed to the ground.

Barely see it, but now Filuru spotted it. Footprints in the grass, moist a bit by water, as it rained a bit earlier.

These guys really *were* experts. Filuru felt slightly embarrassed.

“See these tracks? They’re always outside of buildings. We didn’t enter every building, we only entered abandoned buildings that had tracks of young girls leading towards it,” said Uttakatta

“How do you know they’re young girls?” asked Filuru.

“We can’t know for sure, but we can guess. Firstly, the shoe shape. These ones look like high heels. Most people who wear high heels are female. The size fits for someone of a young age. Most Magical Girls are transformed into their teens or twenties, right? Also, we’re in a factory. High heels leading up to a factory? Unless there’s a formal ceremony,

my bet is Magical Girls.”

Uttakatta’s explanations were done with a grin on her face.

Kafuria landed and looked at the facility.

“Padlock. Seems like it’s locked. You sure this is the right place?” she asked Uttakatta.

“Definitely the right place. Any way we can make it inside without breaking the door? Don’t want to alert the girls, now.”

Filuru felt useful now.

“Oh, I can do it!”

She took out a knitting needle, and she began to meddle with the padlock. In an instant, it unlocked.

She felt helpful at last.

When they entered the facility, however, they found two other guests there before them.

The three of them stood at the entrance, looking at awe at these two. They came straight out of *Alice in Wonderland*.

One looked like the Queen of Hearts, with a flamingo crown on her head.

The other looked like a playing card soldier, with a 3 of Hearts on her robe.

The Queen of Hearts was talking to the Card. The Card girl was whimpering and cowering in fear, making scared noises.

The Queen was sitting on a chair throne, with several runes and symbols adorning it.

The Queen pointed her staff around the room.

“Off with their head!”

She screamed out.

What a strange duo?

“Wait, those symbols and runes. I know them,” said Uttakatta.

Filuru glanced at her ally. “You do? What do they mean?”

Uttakatta whispered over to Filuru, “She’s from the Homeland Divisions.”

The Homeland Divisions.

Within the Land of Magic, there are several Divisions. Of course, they each do their own separate thing.

Examination finds Magical Girls who are causing trouble.

Foreign Affairs deals with human issues.

Human Resources recruits and finds Magical Girls.

All of these Divisions have branches in the human world, offices that Magical Girls can work on. Offices that they can operate in.

There's also a series of Divisions that don't have branches in the Human World. They're higher up, within the Land of Magic.

Most people call these the Homeland Divisions, a group of Divisions characterized by only being within the Land of Magic themselves.

They run most of the Land of Magic.

They're the leadership of them. The layers go deeper than that.

"The runes are symbols from the Information Bureau," said Uttakatta.

"What's the Information Bureau?"

"The Homeland Information Bureau is in charge of managing all the information and intelligence related to Magical Girls, the world, pretty much *everything*. They're directly in charge of Examination and Foreign Affairs."

"So, that woman... she's..."

"She's a big deal. Why is she here, though? They can easily do their job from the Exam and FA Divisions."

"Should we help her?" asked Filuru.

"Of course. We might be able to get a leg-up as well. Being recognized by a Homeland Division is a *huge* honor."

Filuru gulped.

She might get a job at last.

"How-How... How should we approach her?" said Filuru, visibly nervous.

"Leave this to me," said Uttakatta.

Filuru only watched from the side. Nervously awaiting what would happen.

Uttakatta approached the Queen, strutting all formally.

"Greeting, Your Highness."

"Off with your head."

"Ah, before you do that, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Uttakatta, I'm a Freelancer from the Land of Magic..."

"Off with your head."

"...I'm here to offer my assistance to you, as I and two other of my partners may have been sent for the same reasons."

The Queen placed her hand on her chin, bored.

"Off with your head!"

"We were sent to find Man-Made Magical Girls! I assume you have as well."

"Off with your head..."

“Either way, I believe I can help you, because my friends and I have had the chance to face these Man-Made Magical Girls!”

The Queen tilted her head curiously,

“Off with your head?”

“Yes! In fact, that’s why we were here! We’ve come to assist you, so please allow us to help you, Your Highness,” said Uttakatta bowing down.

The Queen closed her eyes and nodded.

“Off with your head.”

“...And what, may I ask, is your name?”

“Off with your head.”

“...I see.”

“Her name’s Grim Heart, and this soldier is Shufflin,” said Kafuria from behind Uttakatta.

“Wait, you understood them?” asked Uttakatta.

“Yes, of course,” said Kafuria smiling.

“How?”

“Go with the flow, Uttakatta. You’re just not going with the flow,” said Kafuria.

“Off with their head,” said Grim Heart nodding, confirming Kafuria’s statement.

Well... I guess that confirms their name? Still, what now?

“We found a facility, but we’re not sure where else to go, right? Any ideas?” asked Filuru.

“I’m guessing secret base. Underground?” suggested Kafuria.

Filuru had an idea.

“Wait here.”

She began knitting her threads around the floor, feeling the vibrations as she pulled and pulled. Finally, she found it.

A secret passageway that she pulled with her strings, revealing an entrance downstairs.

“Ah, wonderful work, Filuru,” said Kafuria.

Grim Heart got up from her throne, and Shufflin placed the large throne onto a small satchel that she’s carrying.

At first, it seemed impossible, but it looks like the large throne can fit inside the satchel for some reason. A Magical Item?

Filuru also knitted some threads outside the secret passage, and attached it to her finger. This thread will function as an intruder detector. If it vibrates, Filuru will feel it.

“Looks dark. How will we know it’s not a trap?” asked Kafuria.

“I can send my bubble in, but I won’t know when it pops if I can’t see it, so it’ll have to be

close.”

“...Not necessarily,” said Filuru.

Uttakatta blew a large bubble, increasing its density so that it won’t pop with the slightest touch.

Filuru then knitted a thread on the bubble. Since her threads don’t do damage, it won’t pop the bubble.

Now, they have a sort of balloon that’s controlled by Kafuria, and has Filuru’s threads. They can send it as far as they can, and if it pops, then Filuru can feel it using her string, without even seeing it.

Perfect.

The group descended down, and began their trip forwards.

Kafuria whispered to Filuru.

“By the way, I don’t want to tell you this, but ever since we met Grim Heart and Shufflin, the order’s changed.”

“Order?”

“Death order.”

“Huh?”

“Mhmm, of course, I know who will die earliest.”

“W-Who?”

“Won’t tell you who, but it’s between you and Uttakatta. I’m going to tell her too, now. Seems exciting,” said Kafuria with a smile.

Filuru’s heartbeat raced. She kept going forwards.

☆ **Fal**

Snow White’s team had reached a sort of shutter. It seemed like a door of some kind, that can be lifted upwards.

“Fal. Anything?”

“Nope, Pon.”

Snow White looked around. Finally, she found what seems to be a button. This would probably release the door.

She pressed the door’s button, and when it opened, two Magical Girls were on the other side.

Outfit that looked like swimwear. One was black, the other was white.

Princess-like outfits. Tiaras, one had a yellow gem, and the other had a blue gem.

One was carrying a large hammer, and the other was carrying a large trident.

Man-Made Magical Girls? Fal couldn’t detect them at all. Could this be a theme of the

Man-Made Magical Girls? Princess outfits?

Furthermore, the room inside looked like a large forest, with trees surrounding it, though it was definitely still in the basement.

“Entrance to the facility is forbidden,” said the hammer girl.

“Under whose authority?” asked Lady Proud.

“The Pure Elements’ authority. Step forward, and we’ll resort to violence,” said the hammer girl.

“Wait, we’re not here to fight,” said Snow White.

“You say that, but you have a spear thing out. Nice try,” said the trident girl.

“And *you* have a hammer and a trident out, so who’s the one that doesn’t actually wanna fight, huh? The last one we saw attacked us when we tried peace,” said Umbrain as she stepped in front of Snow White.

“Not another step!” said hammer girl.

“Umbrain, wait,” said Snow White.

“If we need to get it in your thick skulls that we’re not the enemy by fighting, then I’ll take you both myself!” said Umbrain as she continued to step forward.

“I warned you,” said hammer girl.

Without warning, the hammer girl swung her hammer down at Umbrain, but Umbrain was much, much faster than her.

She already opened her umbrella, and when the hammer landed on it, it simply bounced off, as if it were a toy hammer.

The hammer girl was clearly not prepared for that, and ended up tripping backwards.

Umbrain kicked the trident girl halfway across the room. She then slid towards the room, ready to face the two Magical Girls.

The hammer girl tried to attack her, but it was always deflected by Umbrain’s umbrella. Umbrain was simply too fast for the hammer girl.

Umbrain was a trained veteran of the Land of Magic. Newbies would have a hard time fighting her, regardless of how powerful their raw strength is.

The hammer girl may have control of her hammer, but as soon as it hits Umbrain’s umbrella, she always begins to lose balance, as she doesn’t expect the soft recoil to hit her.

The trident girl rushed towards Umbrain. Umbrain anticipated her, and when the trident was going to be stabbed, Umbrain blocked it with her umbrella.

However, the trident then unleashed a barrage of cold air that froze Umbrain’s umbrella.

Shocked, Umbrain took a step backwards. Her umbrella could catch any attack, but it was frozen now, and frozen things can be cracked.

Umbrain dodged the blows from the trident and the hammer. The hammer girl slammed the hammer down, creating a quake that unbalanced Umbrain.

“Umbrain! Get back!” yelled Proud.

Umbrain took out something from her raincoat. A vial of red liquid.

She threw the red liquid straight towards the trident girl as Umbrain tumbled backwards.

Lady Proud seemed to understand the signal.

As the trident girl used her trident to break the vial, the red liquid instantly turned colorless, and after contact with the air, became gaseous almost immediately.

“AAAGH!”

“DELUGE!” cried the hammer girl.

The trident princess covered her eyes as the gas began to burn it.

“Lady Proud, Umbrain! Stop this and rejoin the group! Now!” said Snow White angrily.

Umbrain ran back outside.

Snow White closed the shutter doors, and the three of them ran back to the meeting spot.

“What were you *thinking*!?” asked Snow White.

“She attacked first!” said Umbrain.

“You provoked her!”

“Her teammate from before attacked us first when we were trying to be nice!” said Umbrain.

“Alright, we shouldn’t place blames, not now!” said Lady Proud.

“This isn’t the way! Ngh! We’ll fall back and think of another plan later,” said Snow White, running as fast as they can back to the meeting spot.

☆ **Princess Inferno**

The desert training room. Hot, sandy, and wide. Perfect for Inferno. It seems that every training room was specially built for the Pure Elements, aside from Cherry.

Despite the heat and feeling of a desert, it wasn’t the sun. It was still just a room, with really perfect lighting and sand.

The cacti and desert-like environment simulated the desert perfectly, and here, Inferno will be at her best.

Tempest had followed along. The two were waiting for their enemy group to show up.

“You excited, Tempest?”

“Huh?”

“Excited to fight, I mean?”

“Well... I gotta be, right? I’m a Pure Element!”

“Haha, don’t worry, it’ll be off the record.”

“Hm? Off the record?”

“Look, between you and me, we actually know each other before we transformed, so I kinda feel closer that way, y’know? So yeah, this is off-the-record. Just you and me, what do you think?”

“Honestly, Inferno... kinda scared. But I’m also excited!”

“Right? I haven’t had a chance to fight these Magical Girls before, so I’m actually kinda excited for the chance.”

“I know they’re pretty tough, at least... but I also know that we’re a team, so we’ll make it through... right?”

“Yeah, don’t worry ‘bout that. Cherry’s got our back.”

As if on cue, the doors sprung open.

A flower Magical Girl.

A stylist Magical Girl.

A clown Magical Girl.

No sense of unity. The Pure Elements win that round.

The flower Magical Girl had some type of flower on her head. It was purple, but Inferno couldn’t place what kind of flower it was.

Inferno was never a florist, nor did she care much about flower types. She just knew they were flowers and that they looked pretty.

“Don’t step any fur-”

“Yeah yeah, we get it, hold it, don’t go further, blah blah, guess what, I don’t care,” said the flower girl, interrupting Inferno.

Inferno summoned her Scimitar.

“If you come closer, we’re going to have to fight,” said Inferno.

“PERFECT!” said flower girl.

So that’s how it’s going to be.

“Marika, wait, don’t do anything rash!” said the stylist.

The clown simply covered her mouth with both hands in an exaggerated shocked expression.

“INFERNO!? Don’t *provoke* them, you idiot!!!”

“Don’t worry, Tempest, I got this!”

“No, Quake said fighting’s a last resort!!!”

The flower girl walked over towards Inferno, not stopping, grinning madly.

Alright, she warned her.

Inferno swung her scimitar at the flower girl, but for some reason...

Clang!

Metal?

No, it was the flower girl's head flower. The flower girl had blocked the shot using the flower on her head. It was as hard as metal.

"Nice try, not gonna work!" said the flower girl.

Inferno released the scimitar, and this time swung it towards the flower girl's face.

However...

...The flower girl caught the scimitar with her right hand. The sharp bits didn't even cut her, or if it did, she didn't care.

Flower girl simply grinned as Inferno struggled to move the Scimitar, stuck in the flower girl's hand.

What is this? Why is she so strong?

Inferno gripped her scimitar with both hands, while the flower girl calmly held on with one hand.

Inferno tried to move it, but the flower girl's grip was too strong.

The flower girl sighed,

"Weak," she said as she kicked Inferno halfway across the room, slamming her into the wall.

Tempest responded by turning on Luxury Mode, and Inferno got up as well.

"Luxury Mode, On!"

Now, Inferno could unleash the full potential of her power. Her insides burnt up, expanded outwards.

Now, her sword is on fire, the tip of Inferno's hair was flaming, and the slightest touch of her Scimitar will burn anything.

Tempest, meanwhile, is as fast as ever, and her boomerang will cut through almost anything, creating a gigantic air vortex.

She threw the boomerang, which the flower girl dodged immediately.

The clown threw a throwing knife to stop the boomerang's trajectory, but the knife was cut by the boomerang.

The clown did a *huge* exaggerated disappointment shrug, and she jumped high in the air, avoiding the boomerang.

The stylist was confused, Inferno could tell she's not as much of a fighter as the other two.

"Cherry! Do it now!" said Tempest.

Suddenly, black sludge-like creatures came dropping in from the ceiling. Fallen Disruptors, recreated once more.

They rebuilt themselves into gigantic humanoids, while some of them became black

sludge-like humanoids as well.

The stylist was shocked, “H-How did you get these?”

Inferno charged towards the flower girl, who predictably blocked her shots with her metal flower thing. Except, this time, the flower thing burnt up, and its petals began to wither.

The flower girl looked surprised for just a second, before Inferno kicked her away. The flower girl regained her balance.

Inferno slashed the flower girl, every hit inflicting a wound and fire on her body. However, the flower girl dodged the next shots, and punched Inferno furiously.

Each punch hit like a truck. The strength of this girl was incredible. The punch towards Inferno’s stomach broke several of her ribs. The kick towards Inferno’s chest took the breath away from her.

However, with every hit that the flower girl should have, she should be burning.

In almost every game, grass-types are weak to fire-types.

So why isn’t she...

...Wait, she *is* burning...

...but she’s *smiling*!?

The flower girl breathed and coughed, clearly hurt from all the burns, and she rolled a bit in the sand to take out the fires, but she was still standing, and still smiling.

“*Cough*... You think that fire’s gonna stop me!? I’m having fun here! C’mon... Show me what you can do!”

The shutter door opened, and Inferno saw more Magical Girls.

Overalls, yarn, veiled, a queen, and a card?

“YOU!?” Tempest cried out.

“Oh my, we meet again. A rematch is necessary, it seems?” said the veiled girl.

Tempest charged into her, and the veiled girl flew into Tempest.

Inferno shouldn’t have been watching.

Whack

“Hey, fight’s not over there, it’s with me!”

A punch to the face.

Inferno’s vision was blurring.

She was down on the ground.

The flower girl kicked her across the ribs.

Yes, the flower girl is getting burned with each hit, and her head flower has shriveled and died, but it didn’t matter for her.

The sheer pleasure of the fight is keeping her going.

Inferno began coughing blood. This is bad.

She stood up,

“I could kill you... If I fought... fully,” said Inferno, breathing heavily.

“Then stop talkin’ about it and actually *do* it!”

“How are you handling... so much fire...?” said Inferno, genuinely curious and tired.

“You think this is the first time I’ve handled fire before? Seriously, you’re just like Flamey. You talk big but don’t actually deliver! I’m not even satisfied yet! C’mon! Show me! *Come on!!!*”

Inferno activated every inch of her power. Her body blazing into a ball of flame.

This was the power of Princess Inferno. A large flaming raging blaze.

All of her body was on fire, heat spreading everywhere, everything near her will melt. Luxury Mode guaranteed her a power boost, she felt invincible.

“I’m on home turf, you can’t beat me in the desert,” said Inferno, confident in the battle turning in her favor.

The flower girl laughed loudly, “Home turf? What, the desert!? Wow, you’re more of an idiot than I thought!”

Inferno was confused, but the flower girl offered no other explanations. She simply rushed forwards, towards Inferno.

Inferno was prepared with her flaming Scimitar, if the flower girl approached her, she’d be burned alive.

But then the flower girl did something unexpected...

...She kicked, but not towards Inferno. She unleashed a high kick towards the sand pile in front of Inferno, unleashing a cloud of sand towards Inferno’s body.

“FIRE HATES SAND, BITCH!” said the flower girl.

Inferno was covered in sand, her eyes unable to see from the sudden burst. She could feel the fires in her body begin to fizzle out from the large sand cloud blocking oxygen.

She had thought she turned the tide. She even had a defeated, but back up sequence. The power-up isn’t working...

She heard a voice as she began to rub out the sand from her eyes.

“You like the sun, huh? I’ve got just the flower for you!”

Inferno finally got a good look at the flower girl once more. This time, the flower on her head is different. Completely different.

It no longer was dead, nor was it purple.

It was instead a yellow flower, with small petals compared to the purple one, swirling around.

The flower girl was on all fours, grinning as light slowly began to form on the flower in

her head.

Inferno had watched enough Anime to know where this is going...

...She's going to fire a beam.

Inferno rolled out of the way before the first beam shot. The resulting beam scorched the wall ahead.

Would that beam kill?

Inferno saw the battle on the side. The clown and the stylist were working together to fight a Disruptor. The card, overalls, and knitting girl were also working together.

Wait, the card girl had a strange spear in the shape of a spade.

A spade?

Inferno was certain that she had 3 of Hearts last time. Now she's a 3 of Spades?

Inferno heard the sound of the beam, and she ducked out once again, narrowly avoiding it as it shot the place where Inferno was standing at.

Inferno ran once more, as the flower girl began aiming the beam shots towards Inferno. This is bad, Luxury Mode is almost over, Inferno's feeling tired.

Luxury Mode takes a lot out of the Pure Elements.

Quake told her to retreat when things get bad. She saw the surrounding battle. Disruptors were fighting the other Magical Girls. Cherry's got this, Inferno can retreat for now.

Inferno ran as fast as she could back to the exit of the base, dodging the flower girl's beams as fast as she could.

Inferno closed the doors behind her as she passed them. She went straight for the briefing room, and collapsed as soon as she entered.

Inferno barely had enough strength to stand up. Her Luxury Mode had run out, and she was breathing heavily.

Prism Cherry came to her help, lifting her up as best she could.

"Inferno, are you okay."

"Yeah... Hang on I just need..."

Inferno stumbled towards a shelf. She looked through the drawers, drunkenly going through all of them.

Her vision was blurring. The wounds, the broken ribs, the blood.

She can't pass out now.

She found it. The pill bottle.

She ate two of them. Normally you're not supposed to eat one, but one wasn't enough to heal Inferno's injuries.

She took a deep breath. Everything began healing again. The medicine was working.

“Inferno... Um...”

“Cherry, thanks for the assist,” said Inferno.

“Okay, but... Where’s Tempest?”

Inferno’s eyes widened.

Shit!

☆ **Styler Mimi**

These black humanoids. These black things that were difficult for Mimi to defeat.

Mimi recognized these. Mimi knew what these were based on. The characteristics were similar.

Mao Pam’s wings.

However, these were not completely her wings, either. These were significantly weaker than Mao Pam’s wings.

Mimi could cut them easily with her scissors. Something that would be near-impossible with Pam’s actual wings.

They also regenerate slowly, which means she needs to cut them off as fast as possible.

Mimi saw the card Magical Girl managing to slice one of the smaller humanoids to pieces, and they didn’t regenerate after that.

“Stuntchica! Paralyze it, I’ll cut off the appendages, got it?”



Stuntchica nodded furiously, while putting one thumbs up.

Clap!

Clap!

Clap!

Three claps, three throwing axes. Stuntchica juggled them, expertly dodging everything the black creatures attacked her with.

Stuntchica then threw the throwing axe at the creature's head, as it shrieked in pain. Mimi took her chance.

With her scissors, she expertly sliced the arms off of one of the creatures, and when they reacted by swinging and flailing, Mimi jumped away.

Stuntchica never missed a beat, despite how fast or how angry the giant creature is, she always threw the axes straight at its head, causing it even more pain.

Mimi flipped around it, slicing its final arm. The creature bellowed and screamed, now armless.

Out of nowhere, a giant beach ball appeared behind Stuntchica. She bounced on top of it with one leg, dancing happily, before kicking it straight towards the giant creature's legs, tripping it over.

Mimi took the chance to climb on its back and slice its head off. With that, one of the creatures was killed.

She saw the other fights going greatly as well.

The knitting Magical Girl seemed to have tied two bubbles together, using it as a kind of nunchuck, as the bubbles seem to be stronger than a normal bubble.

She's also using other bubbles as jumping points, jumping from bubble to bubble, while at the same time humanoids were tumbling at invisible threads, and being hit by the swing of her bubble nunchucks.

In only a few minutes, the rest of the black humanoids have died.

Marika slid across the desert hills, her body burnt and wounded from the battle, and the sunflower on her head wilted.

Sunflower?

Last time, Marika had a Clematis flower, but it seems like she switched it to a Sunflower. Marika's flowers bloom normally, but she can forcefully bloom it faster, though then it will wilt faster too.

Everything's fine now, however.

"So, how's things here?" asked Marika.

"You! You made us all fight!"

"We *won*! I don't see any of those Princesses anywhere. That fire chick was a pushover. Thought she'd be as good as Flamey, but still a newbie," said Marika disappointed.

The rest of the Magical Girls gathered, including the suddenly appearing Queen of Hearts, who didn't seem to be affected at all by the combat happening earlier.

"Is everyone here?" asked Mimi.

"Yes, all accounted for, I think. Oh... by the way, I'm Filuru, that's Grim Heart and Shufflin, and that's Uttakatta..." said knitting girl.

"...and Kafuria's... Kafuria?"

Filuru looked around the room. She couldn't find where the other girl is. Mimi had no idea who she's talking about, but they probably came in with another Magical Girl.

"Where's Kafuria?" asked Uttakatta.

"No idea. She was fighting earlier, right?"

"She can't be missing in the sand!"

Mimi, Stuntchica and Marika looked towards each other. These people just arrived, so they have no idea who they're talking about or what's going on.

Uttakatta and Filuru looked around. The girl known as Shufflin simply trembled. She's back to 3 of Hearts.

Uttakatta looked towards the group.

"I think she's been kidnapped," said Uttakatta.

"Kidnapped?" asked Filuru.

"She didn't hold herself well against the Princess in the last fight, I doubt she could hold herself well in a rematch," said Uttakatta again.

"A hostage? If we're gonna free a hostage, why not just burst through and beat all of them up?" asked Marika.

"Because they might kill her. We're on their territory, Marika. We should go back to Snow White. Regroup, rethink our strategy."

Marika sighed loudly, but of course, she'd follow what Mimi suggested.

The others seem to be okay with this too. Styler Mimi was worried. At first, the Man-Made Magical Girls were one thing, but the appearance of creatures that looked like Pam's wings...

...That was another thing entirely.

There has to be answers.

☆ **Fal**

Snow White is a Magical Girl who hates fighting.

Snow White is a Magical Girl who will fight.

These two facts are true.

Snow White always seeks out peaceful solutions if necessary, but Snow White will not hesitate to fight if there's no other way.

When Snow White fights, she doesn't give the enemy a chance.

She will ruthlessly hunt down rogues, wherever they are in the world.

She was nicknamed the Magical Girl Hunter, and she's embraced this nickname. She wants rogues to fear her.

The power of fear is strong. Reputation speaks faster than actions. When Snow White

shows up, the mere mention of the Magical Girl Hunter will usually scare off potential rogue Magical Girls.

She is the boogeyman of evildoers.

But these were all words spread out by propaganda. The true Snow White is a broken girl, trying her best to survive mentally, as her body is in perfect condition.

Snow White will always seek a peaceful solution, she is on the side of good.

But of course, good doesn't mean she's nice. Not anymore. That girl was killed. Snow White was no longer a nice girl, even if she was still someone fighting for good.

Snow White had gathered back into the hallway.

As she approached the central hallway, Fal's sensors picked up more Magical Girls.

"A bunch more, Pon!"

"Ah, visitors?" cried a girl from the hallway ahead.

Snow White, Lady Proud, and Umbrain arrived at the central hallway.

"Greetings, I am Uttakatta, and this is Filuru. Ahead of you is Grim Heart and Shufflin," said Uttakatta.

Fal immediately began scanning their names.

"We also have a lost one. Kafuria. We believe she's been kidnapped. Now, we're all here, what's the plan?" asked Uttakatta.

"We reached a Forest area and got into a little fight. What happened with your group?" asked Snow White.

"Same, except it's the desert area. You guys fought Pam's wings too?" asked Mimi.

"Pam's wings? They have Demons? Homunculi?" asked Lady Proud.

"Looks like it. No idea how, though," said Mimi.

Demons.

That's their unofficial name. Demons. Most people in the higher-ups at the Land of Magic know them as demons.

Not because they're demonic, mind you, though they can certainly make themselves look like that. They're called demons because they come from Mao Pam, who was, herself, very demonic-looking.

Their official designation was *Homonculus*. Semi-sentient beings.

Pam's wings were a miracle. The ability to transform into anything, to be able to work on their own, and even to change shape, density, and pretty much any part of themselves.

The wings were sought out as weapons and security measures. These creatures, demons, weren't as powerful as Pam's actual wings. This is because they were distilled from her, and not her actual magic.

They were weaker, not as adaptable, and had to be specifically created, unable to morph and transform at will.

At first, they worked as planned, but then they became forbidden, due to a certain event.

A long time ago, a selection test went badly because the administrator was reckless. She talked to one of the Magical Girls. Her ability was to summon almost anything.

The administrator told her about the demons. The details were fuzzy and lost at best.

The demon was summoned, it killed almost every one of the girls, and the administrator herself.

The demon was killed.

The killer of that demon's name...

...Cranberry.

Nobody knew why the administrator told her about these demons, or if the girl just summoned the most powerful thing in existence.

The leading theory is that the administrator's Cyber Fairy, Fav, persuaded her to doing so.

Ever since that incident, production of more of these demons was ceased, and whatever remained was purged.

Knowledge on how to create them was lost, or so people thought. It's clear that they've reappeared again somehow.

Either way, they seem to be far weaker than what they could potentially become, and no demon in existence has ever surpassed Mao Pam before.

"We fought no such thing. Just the Man-Made Magical Girls. Princesses, I think," said Snow White.

"Then it's safer for us to go to the Forest room if we want to proceed. The desert room's going to be on high alert, I believe," said Mimi.

Snow White nodded.

The group then proceeded to go to the forest room, now empty. Marika immediately took shade in one of the trees, leaning on them.

Uttakatta and Filuru sat to the side.

Shufflin was unpacking some things from a 4-D bag.

Lady Proud and Umbrain were talking in the corner.

Styler Mimi was pacing in the room, and Stuntchica seemed to be sitting on a ball, juggling as she minded her own business.

Snow White announced to everyone, "I'm going to consult outside for a while. I'll be back,"

All eyes were on her. While they nodded, they were also suspicious, slightly.

Snow White closed the door on her way out, and she activated her Magical Phone. A

stereoscopic image of Fal appeared.

“Kafuria, Uttakatta, and Filuru are Freelancers, Pon! They don’t currently have a job! I can’t find much information about Grim Heart or Shufflin, Pon...”

“Same here. I read all of their minds.”

“Pon?”

“Filuru recently lost her job. She keeps worrying about employment. Uttakatta’s worried about Kafuria. They weren’t lying, but I don’t know about Kafuria.”

“You know, we could just talk to them rather than just scanning them like a stalker, Pon!”

“One more thing, Fal. I don’t know if it’s my powers acting up, but I can’t read Grim Heart.”

“What do you mean, Pon?”

“Shufflin seems to be afraid of everything about Grim Heart. Grim Heart herself, she’s a blank.”

“Like Stuntchica, Pon?”

“No, Stuntchica was a state of bliss. Grim Heart... It’s like she doesn’t exist.”

“Pon?”

“I can’t explain it. With Stuntchica, I can’t read her because she has no worries at all. With Grim Heart... I can’t read her... because it’s like reading nothing. There’s nothing there.”

“Snow... maybe I’m being a bit rude in saying this, but... You need to stop doing this, Pon.”

“Doing what?”

“This Lone Wolf thing. You need to stop.”

“I’m not being a lone wolf, Fal.”

“You *are*, even if you’re with a group, Pon! You’re isolating yourself, making sure others are trustable. You’re not doing a good job at being a team player, Pon!”

“I can’t just freely trust people, Fal. That’s not how the world works,”

“No, it’s not. But you need to learn to trust people again, Pon!”

“Sorry, Fal. I can’t do that anymore,”

“Then you’ve lost what it means to be a Magical Girl, Pon... Have a little faith, Pon.”

“A little faith won’t cut it. Besides, this isn’t the best time to talk about this.”

“Then *when*, Pon? You go around... every day... Every *day*! You don’t take a break, you don’t talk with me about what’s on your mind, I’m worried, Pon!”

“My job is my job, Fal.”

“Your job will *kill* you!”

“What’s with this sudden outburst? Why here of all places?”

“Because it doesn’t matter where or when, Pon... I’ve wanted to have this talk with you for a long time, but you never let me, because you never let anyone into that head of yours! Meanwhile, you scoop around everyone else’s head, looking for their fears, their worries, without even telling them, Pon!”

Snow White didn’t answer.

“Your powers work on Cyber Fairies, right? Listen to me! Listen to my mind, right now! I’m *worried* for you, Pon... Why can’t you understand that? I don’t want you to die doing this...”

Snow White again only looked at Fal. Fal couldn’t tell what kind of feelings Snow White had inside.

She smiled at Fal.

“Fal, you’ve been stalking me, haven’t you?” said Snow White.

“I just... I just want you to be safe, Pon.”

“Alright, I get it. Let’s talk about this later, okay?”

Snow White turned off the Magical Phone, and Fal went back to watching from her bag.

Snow White entered the room once more. She went to the middle of the group, and she looked at all of them.

Grim Heart was sitting on her throne, her legs resting on Shufflin’s back, who was trembling and trembling.

Snow White had no idea what was going on with those two, but she ignored it for now.

“I think we should negotiate with the Man-Made Magical Girls,” said Snow White.

“What?”

“Huh!?”

“WHAT?”

“Off with her head.”

“I agree.”

Only Styler Mimi seemed to agree with the idea.

“They were hostile to us, did you forget the trident girl?” said Lady Proud.

“They fought us because we fought them,” said Snow White.

“What about the other group?” asked Proud.

“Blame Marika,” said Mimi.

Marika was leaning on a tree, smiling at Snow White when she glanced at her.

“I don’t *do* talking. I’m only lookin’ for a good fight. Those girls are strong, but not the strongest. I know they’re *capable*, though. As long as I can find the strongest enemy, I’m pretty much happy, and there’s nothing you can do to stop that,” she said with a smirk.

Snow White's fist almost bottled up.

Fal knew why. These were the exact same things said by Cranberry. Snow White still dislikes those things, but she ignored them all.

"Either way, I know they're not hostile to us," said Snow White.

"And how do you know that?" asked Uttakatta.

"My power is to read people's mind."

Everyone gasped and looked at Snow White with suspicious eyes.

Most veterans don't reveal their powers to other Magical Girls unless they completely trust them. Knowing your power is like knowing your trump card.

Marika laughed from the side,

"Hahaha, what an interesting ability. I've been curious for so long, but never figured. So how's it work? I mean if you're gonna tell us that's your thing, might as well tell us how it works, right?"

"I hear the voices of people's hearts. The voices of people in distress."

"And how does that play in?" asked Uttakatta.

"The Princesses are afraid of us invading them. The Princesses want to talk. There's room for negotiation. We don't want to fight them either, we're here to investigate. If they took Kafuria hostage, then we can get her back without any bloodshed."

The other Magical Girls seemed to be thinking. Many of them nervous, scared, and probably worried of what will come.

"Wait... where's Umbrain?" asked Lady Proud.

Snow White noticed.

Umbrain wasn't there anymore.

Where did she go? She was there a moment ago?

Fal didn't see her. Her umbrella should be a sign.

"Where is she? Where is she!? Umbrain!? Umbrain!!!" cried Lady Proud in vain.

"Where did you last see her?" asked Snow White.

"I- I don't remember... I was talking to her before, and now she's gone, did anyone..."

"Think, Pon. What happened while Snow White was outside?"

"Shufflin picked up a pen from her bag... She dropped it, Grim Heart got mad, screamed, and Shufflin started crying, we looked at her... The pen fell down underneath Grim Heart's throne, and Shufflin picked it up. Then, as punishment, I think Grim Heart made Shufflin a feet cushion, then you came in, and... Umbrain's gone."

Snow White looked at Grim Heart.

Snow White must've tried to read her, but nothing.

Grim Heart leered at Snow White as well.

“You said you could hear the voices of people in distress! Where’s Umbrain!?”

“I can’t hear her,” said Snow White.

“Impossible! Don’t *lie* to me!” said Lady Proud, grabbing hold of Snow White by the shirt.

Snow White released herself, “I’m not going to lie. I can’t hear her. That means she’s not in distress, or she’s too far away.”

“Maybe she’s using magic?” asked Mimi.

“That’s not how Umbrain’s magic works...” said Lady Proud, already beginning to tear up.

“Perhaps she escaped the facility by her own?” suggested Uttakatta.

“Um, that’s not an issue. See, I knitted a lot of threads on the entrance and exits of every room we’ve been through, as an intruder detection system. If anyone stepped on it, it’d vibrate. Aside from us, there’s no one else that came or entered,” said Filuru.

“If those people took Umbrain... If they hurt her... I’m *not* negotiating with them. I’m taking her back!” claimed Proud.

“Don’t get rash, Lady Proud,” said Snow White.

“So what’s your plan here, Hunter? *Talk*? If they won’t talk, we’ll have to beat ‘em up, and get back Kafuria and Umbrain that way,” said Marika in the shade of the tree.

“Off with their head,” said Grim Heart.

“Okay, that’s enough! We need to stop acting rash, and actually start finding out a way to communicate with these girls. I’m going ahead. I’m going to try and talk to them.”

Stuntchica clapped and offered a thumbs up to Snow White. Looks like she agrees.

“I’m coming along. If it’s Kafuria we’re talking about. Filuru should come too,” said Uttakatta.

“Eh!? Me? I-I guess... I’m not sure if I’m-”

Uttakatta interrupted her and began whispering to her,

“Think of it this way. We’ll live longer if we follow the level-headed one. Mimi’s level-headed, Snow White’s level-headed, the rest has their own issues. I’d stick with Snow White if I were you.”

“Filuru, right? I understand you’re out of a job. Fal, could you do me a favor and find any openings in the Land of Magic?”

“No problem, Pon!”

Filuru’s eyes widened.

She began smiling.

She hugged Snow White and was in tears, probably happy that she might gain

employment again.

She awkwardly released Snow White and began bowing down.

“Thank you... Thank you so much... Okay... Okay, I’ll come with.”

First Kafuria, now Umbrain... Where are they? Fal doesn’t think that kidnapping might be the only issue at play here.

☆ **Princess Deluge**

Quake’s feet were trembling, despite her being stoic.

Cherry was crying.

Inferno was pacing in the room.

“I’m sorry... I’m sorry... I’m so sorry, you guys...” said Inferno.

“I didn’t see her in the monitor, Tempest was gone... I couldn’t see her,” said Prism
Cherry trying to hold back tears.

The youngest among them, Tempest, seems to have been kidnapped.

“We all need to calm down. It’s possible the other Magical Girls out there are trying to use her as leverage against us.”

Deluge was hugging herself in fear. She knows that this was instinct. Hugging herself was like making a wall in your mind.

She didn’t want to accept that this happened. Just a few hours ago, they were having a fun time with Tempest.

Inferno was hit the hardest, because she knew Tempest personally.

“SHIT!”

Inferno flared up and smashed a desk.

“Inferno!”

“GODDAMMIT!” she said as she kicked a sofa across the room.

“INFERNO!”

Inferno didn’t stop and punched a wall, denting it and burning it as well, her body becoming even hotter with flames.

“INFERNO! CALM DOWN. NOW!” said Quake in a loud voice.

Inferno’s flames began to die down.

“...It’s my fault,” said Inferno weakly.

Quake approached her and grabbed her in the shoulder. Inferno hugged Quake,

“I left her... Quake, I left her... I wasn’t thinking about her, I was being selfish... I was scared so I left here, and I forgot about her...”

She began to cry.

“Inferno, don’t blame yourself,” said Quake.

“The fight started because of me... Tempest didn’t want to fight. I wanted a fight, Quake... Tempest was afraid to fight, but I kept... I provoked them... I could’ve done better... Quake, I’m sorry...”

Safety first was Quake’s first order, and Inferno believes that she broke it.

Cherry looked on from the side, glancing at Deluge as well. Right now, Deluge could only imagine what Inferno is feeling.

Inferno knew Tempest personally, and if she was hurt...

...Deluge imagined what would happen if Prism Cherry was hurt and missing. She’d probably have the same reaction, as they knew each other in real life.

“Inferno, pull yourself together, okay? We’ll get her back. If they took her, they probably have her as a hostage, they won’t kill her, that’s not how it works, okay?”

“I... I’m sorry... I wanna see her again Quake... I’m sorry... I need to apologize to Tempest...”

“We’ll *find* her, here. Calm down, okay,” Quake said, offering the medicine.

Deluge took some medicine for herself too. It helped her ease her mind, strengthen her body, and calm herself.

Inferno took the medicine, Quake as well.

Inferno took a deep breath, nodded.

“Thank you, but... I still need to make this right,” said Inferno.

“We will. We’ll find Tempest. Even if we’ve used Luxury Mode, we’ll find her. We’ll get her back, okay?”

The room was quiet. Deluge was afraid to say anything, so did Cherry.

“Hey, Pure Elements, do you hear me? We’re a team! We leave no one behind! We’re getting our family back together, got it!?” said Quake.

“Got it!” said Inferno.

Deluge felt invigorated by that,

“We’ll get Tempest back.”

Cherry also, from the back, “I’ll do everything in my power to help you guys.”

“Alright. For Tempest. Let’s go,” said Quake.

For Tempest.

They need to get her back.

Tempest is family.

Nobody messes with family.

INTERLUDE

☆ Pythie Frederica

Pythie Frederica is multitasking.

On one hand, she had a strand of hair, and is checking on her crystal ball. On the other hand, she was also making some nice tea, on the other hand, she was also eating some biscuits.

Multitasking is pretty normal for Frederica. She'd done this before.

She took out her hair collection, files among files of them, as well as a jar of (still recovering) collection, taken away when she was imprisoned.

She opened various files, with a picture of the Magical Girl in it.

Ripple.

Ah, Ripple, with her nice glossy straight hair. Frederica always took care of that part in the months that Ripple had been staying with her.

Among all things, she had to always keep Ripple's hair in top shape over everything else. Like any good caretaker should.

She then grabbed another file, and opened it. This one's new, sent to her recently.

She read, page upon page upon page...

...Bored, let's look at the crystal ball.

Ah, Snow White.

Snow White has grown. She's become braver than before. She's become her own self, willing to deal out justice.

Pythie was so proud of her, she's glad that she's become the most amazing Magical Girl alive.

To think, Pythie was a part of her growth. She raised her well.

She turned the page of the new file. What's this? Strapped to a cellophane strip, was a strand of hair.

A unique strand of hair.

The strand would change color depending on the lighting. First silver, then blue, then purple, then pink. Oh my...

...Oh my my...

Sniff

Oh.... My my.....

What kind of unique hair is *this*?

Did you know that hair can tell a story of a person?

Cranberry's hair is gold and curled, representing her twisted life, yet still elegant sense of beauty.

Mao Pam's hair is rough but combed, she's sophisticated, yet she is also a person with respect, and strength.

Snow White's current hair is soft, yet dirty. A pure innocent soul, submerged into a harsh reality, and still keeping her ideals until now.

So what is this hair? Changing color, like a beautiful diamond gem, soft? Straight? Curly? A strand can't tell everything, Pythie needed to see all of it.

Pythie placed the hair in her lips, tasting it, smelling the aroma, savoring it as it changed colors.

She couldn't bear it. She turned the page of the file to see who's hair this belonged to, curious about the owner.

As she saw the picture, Pythie fell back on her chair in shock. She fell backwards, that was how amazed she was at the picture.

Such beautiful hair, oh my... If only she could see her in real life.

Oh wait, she can.

Pythie began to chuckle to herself. She must've made herself drunk on hair.

She dusted herself and stood up, readjusting her chair. She placed the strand on her mouth, wanting to taste it again, and twirled it on her right index finger.

CHAPTER 4

I'M THE VILLAIN

☆ Prism Cherry

This was all Cherry's fault.

She should've said something.

She should've told them, she should've talked about the Land of Magic, she should've told them about actual Magical Girls.

Why didn't she say anything?

She didn't know anything about these Disruptors or anything like that.

Labs? Magical Girls being made by humans with equipment?

That's not how Magical Girls work in real life.

Cherry knows the truth, yet she didn't tell them.

Magical Girls aren't created in labs or facilities.

They don't transform with gems on their tiaras.

They don't have matching uniforms, certainly it's even rarer for someone that's not blood-related to have similar powers, and even their names.

They don't have power-up forms. Luxury Mode? How was that even possible?

They don't need to drink these strange pills. Medicine? Magical Girls can stay transformed however long they wanted without any ill-effects.

The Pure Elements were different, but they don't know that, and it's Cherry's fault that she didn't tell them in the first place, now they're paying the price for it.

And for what?

...Because I wanted to be accepted

You'd sacrifice your friends just so you could be special?

...I wanted to be a hero

All those weeks fighting Disruptors and you never told them anything.

...I had fun fighting alongside them

If you tell them now, they'll consider you an outsider.

...I liked talking about our adventures in school with Nami

They'll throw you out

...I'll be shunned

They'll think you're a traitor

...I won't be a Pure Element anymore

You'll never be a hero

...But I could've saved them

Your chance is over

...Everyone's fighting

You could've been happy with yourself, but you pretended to indulge in their fantasies

...Because they're my family

You've gotten them killed

...I wanted to save them

You'll destroy them

...I need to

You have to

Make this right

Make this right.

The door to the briefing room opened.

That was strange.

Was Deluge already finished with their assignment? They can't have finished it that fast. They barely even met or said anything.

Cherry looked at the door.

Who was this Magical Girl?

There was a strange Magical Girl at the door. Cherry only saw a brief glimpse of her. She had a look of malice.

The Magical Girl had a gigantic scythe on her.

A Grim Reaper?

Cherry didn't have time to react. The Magical Girl ran towards her at blinding speed.

Cherry stood up from her chair, but by the time she did, it was already too late. The Magical Girl swung her scythe.

Not like this

The last thing Cherry saw before she fell unconscious was blood.



I have to...

Blood covering the white floor, as she fell backwards.

...Make things right

☆ **Styler Mimi**

Right now, there are only a few Magical Girls with an actual plan.

It's common for people to get stressed out in a situation like this, but it's also important to

keep a level head, and keep moving on.

So far, the only Magical Girls that were calm and collected were...

...Styler Mimi herself, since she knows how important it is to be calm at a time like this.

...Snow White, the Magical Girl Hunter never seems to be panicked in any situation.

...Uttakatta, despite everything, she seems to be level-headed.

...Filuru? Perhaps. She's a little nervous, but she's not rash.

Lady Proud was among these before, but ever since Umbrain's disappeared, she's been an emotional wreck.

Marika Fukuroi was out of the question. Yes, she looks calm, but Marika will immediately go to battle the first chance she gets, so she's definitely not part of the equation.

Meanwhile, Stuntchica is just a mystery. She's back there, in her beach ball, juggling happily.

Then there's Grim Heart and Shufflin. Really, Mimi had no idea what was going on with those two at all.

The first step to a peaceful solution is negotiation. They need to find out where Kafuria and Umbrain were taken.

The forest room was actually quite good for Marika. Marika Fukuroi had the biology of a plant, in a way.

Her flowers that bloom in her head, she could bloom it naturally, and it'll last with the lifespan of the flower.

She could also use her magic to instantly bloom it, though it'll wither instantly afterwards.

So a forest area, with sunlight, albeit artificial, was a good place for Marika to be in.

The group walked towards the end of this room, vast and large, until they saw the exit doors in the distance.

When Snow White opened the door past the Forest room, she was greeted by three other Magical Girls on the other side.

It's those princesses. The Man-Made Magical Girls.

The fire one, a black one, and a blue one.

Marika immediately jumped upon seeing them, but Mimi held her in the neck, urging her to stay put.

Lady Proud also stood up immediately, heading towards them angrily.

It looks like the rest of the group is going in.

"Give us back Tempest," said the black suited one.

It was Lady Proud that came forward, "After you give us back Umbrain! What did you do to her!?"

Snow White placed her hands on Proud's shoulder, holding her back,

“Wait, we’re not here to threaten, we’re here to talk.”

“We’d also like Kafuria back as well,” said Uttakatta from the side.

“Our request first! You give us back Tempest *right now!*” shouted the flame Magical Girl, stepping closer to Snow White’s group.

That’s when Snow White’s eyes widened.

“...Akari?”

“What? Wait, huh!?”

Snow White instantly de-transformed.

A high school girl? The Magical Girl Hunter was really a high school girl. She didn’t look any different from her Magical Girl form.

It was near-similar, except for the different hairstyle.

It looked like the princesses were shocked as well. More shocked, however, was the red princess.

She didn’t move, and Snow White looked her in the eyes, then she transformed back into Snow White.

“...Koyuki?” said the red princess.

“Akari, what are you doing in a place like this?” asked Snow White.

“I.. I’m a Magical Girl, so... wait... Koyuki, you’re...”

The two girls stared at each other for a while. The red princess seemed to be in disbelief. From what Mimi can gather, these two must’ve known each other before.

But Snow White just pulled a very risky move by revealing her true form.

Even Mimi wouldn’t do that. Not in a room full of people she didn’t know.

Stuntchica seemed to shrug her shoulders while shaking her head. Even she disapproved of that kind of reveal.

The red princess went from several emotions at once.

Disbelief,

Confusion,

Anger,

Sadness.

She walked over to Snow White, closer than before.

“Koyuki... You... You’re a kidnapper!?” she said in a soft, accusatory voice.

“Akari, we’re not-”

“Give me back Tempest, dammit...”

“Akari, we’ve never even seen Tempest.”

“Y’know... Y’know something, Koyuki? I was really happy to see you in the shopping center, you know that?”

“Akari...”

“You came all the way to S-City... All the way to where I live, just so you and your little gang here could invade us? Attack us? Kidnap one our own?”

“Listen to me-”

“No, Koyuki, *you* listen! We haven’t seen each other since *elementary*! You know how long that’s been? Y’know, you’d think a childhood friendship reunion would be a happy one? Do you even know how this feels, Koyuki!?”

“Akari, please calm down,”

The red princess released her scimitar, burning red, pointing it at Snow White.

Marika released herself from Mimi’s grip, and every other Magical Girl began to equip their weapons. Even Mimi took out her scissors.

Snow White also took out her halberd, *Ruler*, from her bag.

“Akari... I don’t want to fight,” she said.

“Then give me back my friend.”

“We’ve never *seen* her. We didn’t take her,” said Snow White.

“Give us back what’s ours as well!” shouted Lady Proud, with a red vial in hand.

“Proud, Akari, everyone *listen to me*! The princesses don’t have them, we don’t have your hostage, none of us have anyone! We’re being set up!” said Snow White, in the middle of the group.

Mimi and the rest of her group were behind Snow White, weapons ready.

The princesses in front of Snow White, weapons ready.

Snow White with *Ruler*, in the center, trying to calm the situation down.

Then Snow White’s eyes widened.

Immediately, she swept her halberd down, knocking the red princess off-balance. At the same time, a large claw thrust itself where the red princess’ head used to be.

Snow White quickly rebounded, blocking the gigantic black claw with her halberd, deflecting it, and thrusting her halberd towards the demon’s face.

Snow White stabbed the demon, and the demon screamed in pain from behind. The other princesses seemed shocked.

“Enemies! Get back!” shouted Snow White.

Every Magical Girl retreated, as a variety of demons began approaching. No longer black humanoids, these things were huge.

One looked like a large horned beast, and another had wings like a bird. These demons were the more dangerous ones.

The princesses also went into the Forest Room and retreated, but they seemed shocked and confused.

The blue princess shouted out to someone,

“Cherry, what’re you doing? They’re attacking us, too!”

Were these demons controlled? Either way, they were attacking everyone, and that included Mimi’s group.

Filuru and Uttakatta immediately got to work, both of them knew what they were doing, using the bubbles and Filuru’s threads to create nunchucks and wrecking ball-like movements.

Shufflin was running away scared, as she was trying to avoid the variety of demons trying to chase her. A large tail of one of the demons hit her, and sent her flying away, as she cried with large shrieks.

Snow White was engaging one of the more animalistic demons.

It was four-legged, and had horns like a bull. It charged immediately towards Snow White, which she effortlessly dodged, while placing her halberd in a way that momentum would handle the rest.

When the demon charged and Snow dodged, the halberd slashed it apart, instantly killing it.

Next was another demon, larger, humanoid this time.

Snow White readied her halberd, the large demon began to slam its huge arms, but Snow blocked it with her halberd.

That thing seems unbreakable.

Still, the impact caused Snow to fall flat on her back, still blocking the blow.

That’s when some throwing knives were thrown to the demon’s face.

The demon screamed in pain, and a whistle was heard, calling for Snow White. She looked behind her, and she saw Stuntchica waving happily.

Clap!

She produced knives from her palms, and began juggling them.

Snow White nodded, and Stuntchica kicked her beach ball to the demon. She threw one knife at the demon, and she started to advance towards it, two knives at her hands.

Her acrobatic skills were amazing, as she effortlessly dodged the demon’s flailing attacks, while Snow White slashed the demon with her halberd every chance she got.

Stuntchica threw one more knife at the demon’s leg, making it howl in pain, and Snow White stabbed her halberd straight at the demon.

Its large movements caused Snow White to lose her grip, and the demon roared as began to lose control.

Stuntchica threw the last knife towards the demon’s head, but the demon ducked in time.

However, the knife's arc made Snow White perfectly catch it. Stuntchica was never aiming for the demon's head, she passed the knife to Snow White.

Snow then climbed above the demon, and stabbed it straight in the head, finally killing it as it began to dissolve into a puddle.

Stuntchica clapped happily, jumping and skipping around. Snow White picked up her halberd once more, but when she looked around, she noticed that even more demons began arriving.

Mimi had been safe on her own, as the demons seemed to come after the more active Magical Girls.

She saw Marika eat a seed, and then she began blooming a purple flower.

Mimi knew exactly what that flower was.

Marika, you idiot!

"Clematis!" shouted Marika happily.

Clematis, or as Marika prefers on its full name, the Buttercup of Iron, is a buttercup flower. When used with Marika, it becomes as hard as metal, and not only that, it really is as tough as metal as well.

While it can be used as a head shield, there's a far more effective... and deadly... usage for Clematis.

Marika can control the flowers in her head, which means she can control the petals, if they should need to move.

She whirled the petals round and round, and the metal flower basically acts as a gigantic sawblade.

The only problem is the sawblade doesn't distinguish between friendly or enemy.

Marika also needs to keep her head ducked down if she actually wants to do any damage with it, which means that almost every time she wants to use such an attack...

"SHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!"

...She'll have to run in blind like a rhino.

"MARIKA, WAIT!"

She ran as fast as she can, aiming herself towards the demons. Snow White and Stuntchica were in her way.

Stuntchica flailed in an exaggerated scared expression and dived away, while Snow White rolled out as soon as Marika came close.

Her flowers hit the trees, rocks, demons in the way. Everything became cut in half, with Marika screaming as she ran like a blind mad cow.

Almost everyone was disoriented by Marika running around.

Mimi couldn't see where anyone was, panic set out amongst them, and it's not like Marika can kill all the demons with it, she could barely see what's in front of her.

A bird demon bit Shufflin by the neck and grabbed her as she screamed in terror.

Filuru saw this, and she instantly knitted some threads in order to get tall enough to tackle the bird.

Filuru jumped on top of the bird, and used her threads to knit the bird down, jumping off and sending the bird demon crashing down into the ground below.

When Filuru went over to check on Shufflin, she saw that Shufflin's neck was already torn apart.

Shufflin's eyes were dead, frozen in fear, and it looked like she was gone.

Filuru was too late, and Mimi could see the frustration build up in Filuru's eyes.

A large demon was sent flying into a tree. Lady Proud was fighting it. Her kicks and punches were powerful.

This demon was the largest of the group, and Lady Proud had been taking it on her own. Her punches and kicks weakened the large demon, enough that she began to get the upper hand.

The demon fell to the ground. Lady Proud stood above it.

"Retreat!" yelled Snow White.

Mimi looked for Marika, and saw that her Clematis had begun withering.

"Marika!"

"I'm staying!" she replied.

"Retreat! They keep coming, there's no way we can win!"

"No! We fight!" yelled Lady Proud, as she slammed her foot down the demon's throat.

"We're not going to win at this rate, Proud!"

"We're Magical Girls! We win because we believe we can win! I'm not losing, not this time!"

Lady Proud smashed her leg on the demon's face.

"We need a plan!"

"Why should I suddenly trust you? You know one of those princesses, you could be protecting them!"

She smashed it again.

"I'm not fighting against anyone, here! We're all being manipulated!"

"You read minds, how do I know you're not trying to trick me too, huh, Magical Girl Hunter?"

Once more she smashed the demon's face with her leg, as the demon began to growl in anger and pain.

"Listen to me, we can't--"

“No! We can’t give up like this! I’m not just *giving up*!”

When she wanted to slam her leg onto the demon’s face once more, the demon opened its jaws, ready for the fourth time.

Proud wasn’t looking where she was stepping. She was too busy arguing with Snow White.

The demon chomped on Proud’s leg.

“GYAAAAH!”

It stood up, screamed in anger and shook her around as she was bitten. Her blood was scattered almost everywhere.

The demon threw her up and chomped on her body, wagging her around like a chew toy.

Proud screamed, but on her face, wasn’t the face of fear.

That scream was a warrior’s scream. She was angry. She was angry because she knew, at that moment, she would most likely die.

Mimi knew as well.

Mimi knew what Proud was feeling.

Proud wouldn’t be able to save Umbrain. Proud had failed her, she was, ironically, too proud of herself to listen.

She wasn’t focused.

Now she’s going to pay the price.

That face of anger and regret. The demon must’ve swallowed a lot of Proud’s blood, and more of her blood was splattered on the demon.

That’s when the demon suddenly stopped. Its eyes widened in shock.

Proud had one last laugh and smile, as the large demon bucked down, its body shaking, and...

...It exploded.

The explosion tore many chunks of the demon throughout the room, Proud had turned her blood into something that caused it to explode inside the demon.

Proud’s mangled body was sent flying across the room as well.

That’s two dead...

...Shufflin and Proud.

Snow White’s face was angry. Angry that Proud didn’t listen to her, but also angry that lives were lost.

“I’ll say this one more time, we need to *retreat*!”

That’s when Mimi realized what Marika’s new flower was.

Red.

Big.

Slightly smelly.

Oh no.

Mimi screamed again, “WE NEED TO GET OUT, NOW!”

There were still demons in the room, but the Magical Girls were quick.

Uttakatta, Mimi, and Snow White ran over to the exit.

The black and red princesses retreated to the other exit.

Filuru ran over to Snow White’s exit, but found the blue princess, tired from fighting one of the demons.

Filuru grabbed her by the neck and ran as fast as possible to Snow White’s exit.

“What about Marika!?” asked Snow White.

“Where’s your mascot?” asked Mimi

“What?” replied Snow White

“Where’s your mascot!?”

“Pon!?” said the mascot appearing once more.

“Do the demons have a sense of smell?”

“Uh...”

“DO THEY!?”

“Yes, Pon!”

“Good! Leave Marika there!”

Marika was already on her fours. That large flower on her head was extremely heavy and hard to carry around.

The demons were approaching her in the middle of the room.

Mimi immediately closed the door.

As the doors closed, she could just barely hear Marika shout out before the sound was shut off completely.

“Rafflesia!”

Rafflesia is one of the largest flowers in existence.

It’s also one of the smelliest flowers in existence as well.

Mimi checked to make sure everything was clear. Looking at the window, she saw Marika on her fours, the Rafflesia flower on her head brown and withered, breathing heavily.

Using the Rafflesia flower was extremely tiring to her. The weight is huge, and multiple flowers grow on Marika, so that extra weight means that whenever she uses Rafflesia, she can’t move.

The Rafflesia flower unleashes a horrid stench in a large radius when used by Marika. Of course, Marika herself is immune from this smell.

However, anyone caught within the smell will immediately faint. Anyone caught in the edges will definitely vomit, as a best-case scenario.

Mimi waited ten minutes.

If those demons couldn't smell, then Marika would've been dead in an instant, as she couldn't move at all.

Once she was sure the stench was possibly gone, she opened the doors.

Everyone gathered around Marika.

"*Huff... Huff...* Gimme a minute, this thing's heavy as crap..."

"Marika, you reckless little..."

"Hey, shut it for a bit... *huff...* it worked, right? Demons are all dead."

So was Lady Proud, and Shufflin...

They're running out of people, and they need to figure out what's going on.

☆ **Princess Inferno**

Inferno and Quake had run the other way, mostly because they were worried about what that flower girl had in store.

Her teammates seemed to avoid her, so Inferno and Quake took the quickest route to the Briefing Room.

But Deluge... Deluge was with them.

"Inferno, focus! I don't think they mean us harm, but whoever got to the Briefing Room must've sent those Disruptors."

Cherry was in the Briefing Room, wasn't she?

What happened to Cherry?

What kind of Disruptors were those? Usually, the Pure Elements would catch the Disruptors, place them in the labs, and they could be used to fight off intruders, but these ones. These ones were Disruptor classes that Inferno's never seen before.

Stronger than the ones before as well.

Inferno didn't want to think about the implications. She didn't want to think about what might happen to Cherry. She didn't want to think about Tempest.

Her thoughts went to Koyuki.

She was a Magical Girl? But why was she on the other side? Inferno couldn't think of Koyuki as a bad guy, but it's been years since they met.

To think, a Childhood Friend reunion... But still... Usually, if you meet a childhood friend and find out you're both Magical Girls, shouldn't that be a happy moment?

This was the opposite. Finding Koyuki in the midst of their enemies...

...It conflicted Inferno.

Koyuki can't be bad, so what's she doing with them? Are they actually peaceful?

If so, why take Tempest? Why kidnap her?

Maybe they didn't, but if they didn't, then who did?

Inferno and Quake ran, with Inferno removing those thoughts from her head.

Briefing Room.

Inferno and Quake opened it, and what they found were 4 Magical Girls.

No, actually, it was more like 1 Magical Girl, but there were 3 Magical Girls that were similar in nature.

One was the Queen of Hearts.

The other 3 were... similar. They looked like card soldiers. The only difference was the images on their robes.

Jack of Spades, Queen of Spades, King of Spades.

"Off with their heads!" yelled the Queen of Hearts.

The three Magical Girls rushed to Inferno and Quake.

Inferno and Quake have trained for this kind of situation. They nodded at each other, and Quake instantly slammed her hammer down to the ground.

At the same time, Inferno jumped to the air. The hammer creates an Earthquake that's strong enough to knock a Magical Girl off-balance.

The card soldiers all fell down, and Inferno landed back to the ground. The Queen of Hearts however, was still standing there, yawning.

She was the leader, she had to be taken out first.

Inferno rushed ahead towards the Queen of Hearts, and thrust her scimitar towards her chest.

The Queen didn't even try to move. She just stared at her with no interest.

Her scimitar didn't pierce through.

There was no damage.

That's when Inferno noticed something else. On the ground floor, there was a pool of blood.

Where was Cherry?

Was Cherry...

...dead?

The Queen of Hearts yawned once more,

“Off with her head.”

Inferno reacted fast, the King of Spades nearly stabbed her, but it was blocked with Inferno’s scimitar.

Quake was fighting off the other two soldiers.

Inferno swung her scimitar to block the spear that the King of Spades swung at her. Inferno activated Luxury Mode.

Her reaction time was faster, and now every attack would burn with a touch. She advanced towards the King of Spades, but the King of Spades was fast, dodging every swing, dodging every stab.

Fortunately, Inferno didn’t give the King of Spades time to react.

In the distance, Quake was also swinging around her hammer in Luxury Mode. Her Luxury Mode made her even more resistant to damage.

The power of the Earth protected Princess Quake.

Inferno swung wildly at the King of Spades, managing to burn her shoulder and legs.

The soldiers grouped up together, taking turns to handle both Princesses. Despite having Luxury Mode on, it was getting harder and harder to keep up with these card soldiers.

King and Queen of Spades teamed up to slice Inferno in the legs, causing her to scream in pain. The King of Spades then grabbed her by the tail and swung her towards Quake, who was too busy handling the Jack of Spades to notice.

The two crashed onto the side of the wall. Luxury Mode was running out.

This was going bad. These Magical Girls were way too powerful.

That’s when Quake moved her lizard tail in an ‘8’ shape.

Inferno knew the signal.

She responded by moving her own scorpion tail in an ‘8’ shape.

They raised their weapons, their gems shining brightly. This was their most powerful killer move.

They practiced this move, but they didn’t want to pull it off anywhere but the base. Even then, they’ve never pulled it off in the Briefing Room.

Their ultimate skill.

The one they saved up for the Big Bad.

The Final Boss.

This skill needs at least two Princesses in Luxury Mode. Though they could perform it with all four if they wanted to.

Ultimate Princess Explosion.

This skill causes a large nuclear blast, in a radius depending on the number of Princesses there were.

With two Princesses, a radius of 200 meters could be achieved.

With three Princesses, a radius of 600 meters could be achieved.

With all Princesses, a large city would be decimated by the blast.

This is why they've never used it outside. Now, however, against enemies like these, it seems like they had no choice.

They raised their weapons, the bright light shone in the room.

...If Cherry were hiding here in the room somewhere...



...I'm sorry I couldn't save you

“ULTIMATE PRINCESS EXPLOSION!!!”

The two slammed their weapons to the ground, and a large white light enveloped the room, as everything began to burn.

Inferno closed her eyes, but even the insides of her eyelids looked white. That's how bright this super move is.

She couldn't remember the last time they properly used it, but when they did, its destructive power was incredible.

Inferno slowly opened her eyes.

The room was covered in black soot.

The card soldiers were no more, they were all eliminated in one fell swoop.

Inferno couldn't stand.

Luxury Mode wore off, and Ultimate Princess Explosion also wore her down.

Her knees shook, and she fell down. She wanted to stand up, but all her muscles were sore and screaming in pain.

She fell on her knees, and every breath she took hurt.

Heavy.

Pain.

Her vision was blurring.

Quake supported Inferno on her, slinging her arm on her shoulder.

"Inferno, you okay..."

"I'm ... *cough*... I'm fine..."

Every word she said hurt her throat. She wanted to rest so badly, but she knew she couldn't rest.

When she adjusted her eyes...

...She couldn't believe it.

Quake also widened her eyes.

"...You're shitting me..." said Quake in a weak voice.

The Queen of Hearts was still standing, yawning once more.

She pulled out a bag from her cloak. The bag had a star shape on it. It was a tiny bag. For some reason, however, what she pulled out...

...Was a girl.

Just from the head, Inferno and Quake knew what she was pulling out.

A card soldier.

Head, arms, torso, everything fit inside that impossibly small bag. The Queen of Hearts pulled out one last card soldier.

This was her trump card.

The symbol on her robe...

...Ace of Spades.

If they were going based on card rank. Jack of Spades, Queen of Spades, King of Spades.

They were already untouchable by the Princesses. So much so that they needed to use Ultimate Princess Explosion to kill them off.

This was the Ace.

They couldn't fight. Not like this.

Inferno will die if they continue. Why is this happening?

This all seemed like a bad dream...

...Then, Inferno was thrown away towards the entrance of the room. Quake had thrown her outside.

Inferno realized what Quake was going to do.

"Inferno, get back to the others. Meet up with Deluge."

"Quake... Quake, don't..."

"I'm gonna... I'm gonna do something a little heroic, okay?" said Quake, tired and smiling.

"Quake, you need to come with me! Quake!"

"I need to hold 'em off... Listen, Inferno. I'm sorry, okay? For anything I might've done. I've always felt like I needed to protect you guys... So... I'm gonna do that now, okay?" said Quake, barely able to stand.

Inferno was crying, she didn't want to see her go. She knew Quake would die if she stayed in that room.

"Off with her head!"

"QUAKE!"

Quake instantly closed the door, the last thing Inferno saw was the Ace of Spades charging towards her friend.

Quake...

...Quake...

....*Quake*....

Inferno cried. She couldn't defend Quake. She couldn't defend Tempest.

She had to go back. She had to regroup with Deluge.

Inferno picked up what little strength she had, and she ran. She ran like she never ran before.

☆ **Filuru**

Lady Proud and Shufflin had died.

Filuru tried to save Shufflin, but she couldn't do it in time. Shufflin's neck had been teared in half.

Filuru, Uttakatta, Snow White, Styler Mimi, all of them were confirmed to have been sent

the same text message.

She didn't know if the others had been sent these messages as well.

Then there's the actual Man-Made Magical Girls, like the blue princess. She had introduced herself as Princess Deluge.

Her friends were Quake, Tempest, Inferno, and Prism Cherry.

She'd been nervous ever since we were separated.

Snow White and Uttakatta were talking to each other in the corner of the room, as they proceeded to head to the Desert Area.

"You know about Grim Heart?" asked Snow White.

"Know is a very straightforward word. I know her, much the same way I know you, Snow White," said Uttakatta.

"What can you tell me about her?"

"Well, she works in one of the Homeland Divisions. I recognize the runes on her throne when I first saw her. Information Bureau. In charge of your Division, in fact."

"What did she have to say?"

"Tis a mystery. Who knows, since all she said was 'Off with your head'. Couldn't you read her mind?"

"No, I can't."

"Seems like your powers are specifically tuned."

"That's not it."

"Then what is it?"

"I can't read Shufflin or Stuntchica either, but that's because those two's minds are faint and different. Stuntchica is almost always happy, no worries at all, no fears. Shufflin is single-minded. When I read hers, I only read the fear of Grim Heart, but when I tried to read Grim Heart.."

"What?"

"It's like she doesn't exist. It's like trying to read a rock. You can't, because they don't have a mind."

"Are you saying Grim Heart doesn't exist?"

"No, I'm saying that... I don't know, I can't reach her."

"Where is Grim Heart, by the way?"

That's true.

Grim Heart and Stuntchica went missing in the fight, and no one caught wind of them. Where did they go?

"I don't know, but she left her bag here," said Uttakatta, grabbing Grim Heart's bag and slinging it over her.

“Shit!”

Deluge immediately screamed out.

Everyone turned around, confused. Deluge was biting her fingers in worry.

“If someone’s taken control of the Briefing Room, then they can change the password, and control the facility...”

“Password, what password?” asked Snow White.

“We’ll be trapped inside if they change the password. We can’t go outside otherwise. It’s locked from both sides.”

“Who locks from *both* sides?” asked Marika dumbfounded.

“It’s a safety measure in case something happens where we can’t let a threat out!” said Deluge.

“Then we need to get to that Briefing Room,” said Styler Mimi.

They opened the door to the Desert Area. The group entered the room one by one. They hadn’t fully grasped what this place looked like last time.

Desert wastes, some rocks as well.

That’s when they saw a familiar face on the horizon.

7 of Spades, Shufflin.

She’s alive?

Wait...

10 of Spades, 5 of Spades, 6 of Spades.

There were so many of them. What’s going on? There were 9 Shufflins?

“SHE’S HOSTILE!” screamed Snow White.

Joy turned to fear, fear turned to fighting instinct.

As soon as Snow White shouted it, the army of Shufflins came and grouped up on them.

A bunch of Shufflins came piling on top of Marika immediately.

The 10 of Spades engaged Snow White and Princess Deluge.

6 of Spades ran to Filuru, while 8 went over to Uttakatta.

Uttakatta jumped over the Shufflin, and blew a large bubble, encasing Shufflin inside the unbreakable bubble.

Filuru dodged the 6 of Spades attacks, and quickly knitted a thread on 6’s face. In the Desert Area, Filuru had already knitted several different threads from the fight before, so all she needed to do was reuse them.

Like flying, she pulled on one of her threads, and both her and the Shufflin zoomed up to the ceiling.

She slammed 6’s head on the ceiling, and knitted her down to the ceiling, 6 of Spades was

now unable to move.

Meanwhile, Filuru had a bird's eye view of the battlefield, crawling on the ceiling like a spider, as her threads were already sewn there beforehand.

10 of Spades fought Snow and Deluge, who had some trouble hitting her.

10 kept blocking and deflecting both Snow and Deluge's thrusts and swings, and 10 began to scratch and wound Deluge even more.

However, 10 also couldn't seem to hit Snow, who seemed to be one-step ahead.

Deluge seemed to be angered, and gave up using her trident for a full-on attack. Instead, she let the burst of cold air surrounding her trident freeze 10's arm.

Snow White seemed to be one-step ahead of Deluge, and as soon as Deluge froze 10's arm, Snow White brought down the halberd and cut it off.

Marika grabbed an ankle of one of the piling Shufflins and swung her around, batting the other Shufflins, all while laughing madly.

Then she slammed the Shufflin that she grabbed repeatedly to the ground, slamming it over and over, before throwing it away.

Mimi intercepted the thrown Shufflin, catching it by stabbing her with her scissors, and slamming her downwards to the ground.

The Magical Girls retreated to the hallway, while the Shufflins tried to follow through.

When a Shufflin tried to enter the hallway, though, their first mistake was not noticing the threads knitted on the ground.

Filuru was a jailer. She exercised no compassion for killers or criminals. She knew exactly how to operate in the event of a jailbreak.

The threads tripped the Shufflins, and some of them even tied them up.

Filuru's threads were strong enough to tie down Magical Girls, but they were also strong enough to break their bones.

Filuru used her threads to squeeze and physically break the Shufflins, so that they wouldn't be able to attack or walk anymore.

Then Filuru slammed them all to the walls, and tied them down there as well, as the group retreated to the Forest Area.

☆ Grim Heart

Grim Heart kicked the Heart Shufflin around.

Each Shufflin was made for a different purpose.

Grim Heart had a bag for each. The 4-D Bags were essential for storing Magical Girls.

Spades were powerful in combat, their skill unmatched by any other Shufflin.

Clubs were skilled at stealth, the best ones are nearly unseen by other Magical Girls. That's how Grim Heart captured the other girls.

Diamonds were smart, Grim Heart needed them to understand and decode the facility's systems.

Hearts were durable. Grim Heart had no idea what they were used for, she didn't exactly need their protection, so they became her personal punching bag. The highest ranked Hearts wouldn't die anyways.

Then there was the original body.

Joker Shufflin.

Armed with a scythe, this Shufflin was the leader and the head of all the Shufflin hive mind. She was the strategist, the general, and the leader of all other Shufflins.

Grim Heart sat on her throne.

"Your soldiers are losing," she said to Joker.

"The enemy is stronger than I anticipated," replied Joker.

"You anticipated wrong. We have enemies that range from the Mao's School and the other Divisions. You didn't anticipate, your soldiers weren't ready."

"Ace of Spades can handle them," replied Joker.

"Can she? And what of the rest?"

"She is my best fighter, she won't disappoint."

"The Clubs?"

"They're in position in the Forest Area, my liege. None of the others still know they are there."

"What of the experimental bodies that remain?"

"We don't know where the fire one is, but the water one is with them."

"I want them alive."

"Understood, my liege."

Grim Heart belonged in the Homeland Divisions. The Information Bureau. Grim Heart had already planned everything, but somehow it was ruined.

Now she had to handle it herself.

Grim Heart had a plan, the Magical Girl Raising Project.

A way to create Magical Girls far beyond fairies. A way to create the perfect Magical Girl body. But somehow...

...Somehow...

Someone broke in.

Someone found out.

Someone stole the information. Grim Heart knew that a Magical Girl had broken in, bypassed her security.

That information, the secrets to creating a Magical Girl, stolen from her.

From *her*!

By barbarians.

Those of lower rank than her. Barbarians. That's what they are. Grim Heart is a woman of nobility, the rest were barbarians.

To think, a barbarian would be able to bypass her defenses and retrieved information?

Now it's being leaked. Now someone has created an imperfect version of her plan, and created these... these...

Imperfect bodies.

These experimental bodies.

She'd already captured the wind and earth bodies. She needed the other two. She can't let them escape. She can't let anyone leak the information.

Then there was the Magical Girl who found the information. She had to kill her too.

She had to kill the human that created these Magical Girls too.

She also had to kill the people within this facility. They knew about the project. They knew about her plan.

If even one of them survives, then the secret's out. The Land of Magic will know, everyone will know.

Grim Heart furiously kicked the Heart Shufflin, as it cried and cried.

She pulled out from her bag, Kafuria.

Bound, tied, unable to move.

She was screaming something, but it only came out as "Kiiii! Kiiiiiii!"

Grim Heart couldn't understand. She didn't want to understand. She didn't need to understand. She couldn't care less.

Using her powers, people wouldn't be able to talk to her if she didn't allow them to. People also wouldn't be able to understand her if she didn't want them to.

Interaction was only limited to those she granted permission with.

"Joker, off with her head."

The Joker Shufflin nodded.

Kafuria looked up at the Joker, as the Joker raised her scythe. She brought it down, and Kafuria's head rolled on the floor.

Joker Shufflin then began to receive a burst of magical energy.

Shufflin's powers included replenishment of her deck.

Cutting off a Magical Girl's head replenished Shufflin's deck completely. Some soldiers were lost, all were retained.

Back to 52.

☆ **Fal**

“Are we safe?” asked Filuru to Snow White.

The group was back in the Forest area. Right in the middle. No Shufflins to speak of, no more demons.

Were all the Shufflins gone? There’s bound to be more.

Then, Fal saw something he didn’t expect.

Uttakatta’s throat. She’d been pierced by a spear. The spear came from inside the bag that she was holding.

Everyone gasped, Filuru screamed.

Snow White’s eyes widened.

From the bag, came Shufflin. 2 of Spades.

The 4-D Bag. Of course, it can hold Magical Girls too. It didn’t matter what the size or shape was, that bag was completely able to hold anything.

The Shufflin jumped away, towards the hill, as Uttakatta fell down, blood leaking out of her, gagging for breath.

Filuru came over to Uttakatta, holding her in her arms.

2 of Spades jumped towards a rocky hill, and Snow White quickly followed it, but the 2 of Spades hid.

Snow stopped instantly at the hill, and waited there. Looking around.

Fal was slightly confused. What was Snow doing?

Instantly, Snow White blocked a sneak attack from behind her. There was a Shufflin with a mace shaped like a clover.

Queen of Clubs.

Nobody saw her. Snow White could only avoid that due to her powers. Snow kicked Q away,

“They’re hiding!”

Looked like the Clubs Shufflin was better at hiding herself, good enough that not even Fal noticed their presence with his radar.

Their strength was similar to Spades, but it looks like their combat skill wasn’t on par.

“Draw them out, make it so that they can’t hit you! Watch each other’s backs!” said Snow White.

The other Magical Girls were nervous, looking around the Forest Area.

“Deluge! You’re with me!” said Snow White.

Deluge nodded and jumped alongside Snow White, “Stay focused, okay?” said Snow.

Marika swallowed a seed, she also began growing something. Not a flower, but an ivy of some kind.

“STRANGE FRUIT!”

She screamed out, as the ivies began to spread across the Forest area. The ivy managed to catch 5 Shufflins unprepared.

Each of the ivy vines wrapped themselves around a Shufflin’s neck, wrangling her in the process, as Marika grinned with pleasure.

Filuru quickly sped around the arena, sewing her threads on every surface, attaching it to every part of her body.

Mimi glanced at her, “Will it work?”

“Don’t worry, I knitted it to my body, so I’ll detect it if there’s movement.”

“Eh!? Isn’t that... kind of...”

“Ah? Oh, ehehehe, don’t worry! There’s no damage or pain involved.”

“That’s... well... okay.”

Filuru, Uttakatta, Snow White, Deluge, Mimi. All of them retreated to a large mountainside hilltop within the Forest Area.

Club Shufflins that approached would be taken care of by Filuru’s threads, which would trip them off the mountain.

She’d also be able to detect the other Shufflins if they walked around.

A Club tried to sneak by them, but Filuru instinctively tied threads around her, restraining her on top of the hill.

She didn’t even need to look. Her threads told her exactly where they’d be.

Shufflin was powerful, but these girls.

Mao’s School.

Land of Magic jailer.

Freelancer.

Magical Girl Hunter.

These Magical Girls were trained fighters. It would take an army to try and wear them down. They weren’t inexperienced.

These girls were veterans.

They know what they’re doing.

Marika jumped in to the group, looking at Deluge with the eyes of a predator, and a slasher grin.

Snow White stepped between them.

“Not. Our. Enemy.”

“All this switchin’ sides is confusing me! Weren’t we attacking her just a few minutes ago?”

“I’ve read her mind. She’s friendly.”

“Really? Can you read those Shufflin’s mind then?”

“Sort of. They’re single-minded but I understand why now. They’re a hive mind. This isn’t their original body. It’s like listening to fragments.”

“So we beat up the original! Hahaha! Simple as that!”

“How are you so carefree about this!?” asked Deluge nervously.

“Pssh, as long as there’s fightin’ I’m happy!” said Marika.

That’s when the door opened, and another Magical Girl showed up. This one was familiar. A red princess, Princess Inferno.

Her outfit was torn, her body was bruised, blood was dripping across her, and she’s breathing hard.

“INFERNO!” yelled Deluge.

Inferno was struggling to stand, and Deluge slid down the mountain to greet her friend.

Inferno looked at Deluge, tears in her eyes. She fell onto her as Deluge hugged her friend. Fal remembered her, she was fine last time.

What happened in such a short amount of time?

“Quake... Quake’s... Cherry’s... They’re...”

Inferno was crying on Deluge’s shoulders, but she didn’t have the strength to properly move. Deluge comforted her friend.

“Inferno, Inferno, calm down. What happened?”

“They’re dead... They’re both dead...”

“What? What happened?”

“We couldn’t... I couldn’t save them...”

Deluge then saw who was behind Inferno. Her eyes widened in shock, and everyone on the mountain could see her too.

It was another Shufflin.

However, this one... This one was going to be very much a problem.

If the Shufflin’s skill rank was based on their numbers, then even Fal understood what this meant.

This Shufflin’s symbol on her robe.

Ace of Spades.

Spades was the combat Shufflins, and this was the Ace. They’ve only fought numbers. They haven’t even fought the face cards yet.

The Ace was emotionless.

Her movements were fast. So fast that Fal couldn't register. The Ace seemed to ignore the princesses entirely and focused on the girls in the mountain.

Filuru instinctively used her traps, and the Ace stumbled down from the mountain. Filuru was about to tie her down, but the Ace understood what was going on, and managed to jump out before Filuru's threads could entangle her.

This time the Ace jumped up, away from Filuru's ground threads, and as she landed, she kicked Marika away from the mountain.

She used the shaft of her spear to whack Mimi off as well, but when she went for the kill, Snow White managed to barely block it with her halberd.

Filuru was still with Snow. Quickly, Filuru knitted Ace's left arm.

Filuru tugged at her threads, forcing the Ace to move unnaturally, Snow White tried to attack, but the Ace still blocked with her right arm, holding the spade spear.

Filuru tugged downwards, forcing the Ace to fight crouched down. Snow White swung her halberd down, but the Ace blocked it again.

The Ace sweep-kicked at Snow White, which she dodged, but the momentum was used to flip upwards, carrying Filuru, holding her threads connected to the Ace's arm, towards Snow White's halberd.

Snow quickly moved the halberd out of the way.

Ace waited for that moment, and used her spear to hold down Snow's halberd.

Ace then expertly disarmed Snow, sending her halberd flying away. Weaponless, Snow White had to dodge the Ace's spear attacks.

Filuru, however, was one step ahead. On the ground, she caught Snow's halberd using the threads she'd sewn around the arena.

To onlookers, it seemed as if the halberd stopped in mid-air, but Filuru was manipulating her threads to control the halberd.

She aimed it at Ace, and like a bow, shot it out of her threads directly towards Ace of Spades.

Ace dodged, but it wasn't enough, as the halberd stabbed her leg. There was no scream of pain, but Ace was clearly in pain.

"DIE YOU BITCH!" screamed Inferno from behind Ace, her strength regained from her sheer force of vengeance.

She swung her scimitar, but Ace caught the tip.

Inferno used her powers, and the hand that grasped the blade immediately caught on fire. Ace struggled, but Inferno had wanted this.

Regardless of how Ace blocked, the flames will still hit her.

Deluge stabbed Ace's other arm, as Ace was too distracted, halberd on her leg, scimitar on

her arms, now a trident on her other arms.

She froze Ace's arm completely. Filuru also took her chance, and knitted the Ace's remaining free leg down.

Snow White held down her halberd.

The Ace couldn't move.

Just then...

“SHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!”

Marika Fukuroi screamed as she ran straight towards the Ace. The four others holding her down immediately released their grip, just in time for Marika to tackle the Ace as they tumbled across the ground.

The tackle disarmed the Ace, and Marika and Ace fell down from the mountain side.

Marika and the Ace traded blows.

Marika punched the Ace, but the Ace elbowed Marika in the forehead.

Strike to the Ace's chest, a kick to Marika's stomach,

Marika grabbed the Ace and headbutted her, the Ace responded by grasping Marika's neck, and repeatedly pummeling her eye.

Marika grinned, as she began coughing blood.

Marika grabbed the Ace's arm that was holding her neck, a flower grew on her head.

“BUG EATER!”

Smoke immediately came rising from the Ace, as she screamed in pain at the acidic touch that Marika had.

Marika wouldn't let go.

The Ace repeatedly kneed Marika in the stomach. Every hit sent Marika coughing blood.

One.

Marika grinned.

Two

Marika coughed, but she still grinned.

Three

Marika fell to one knee, but she kept grabbing the Ace.

Four

Marika coughed thrice, blood spitting from her mouth.

Five

Marika fell on both knees, exhausted, still grinning.

The Ace grabbed the arm that Marika was using to burn her, the Ace forcefully bent it,

and bent it...

...*CRACK!*

Marika's right arm broke completely

"GYAAAAAH... hNGGGH.... Heh... Haha... HAHAHA"

Marika didn't give up, despite her bone showing from her right arm, she held on, and held on.

The Ace punched her broken arm. Each blow making a sharp crack as it broke Marika's bones with every hit.

Marika's eyes were focused, though Fal could tell she was in pain.

Marika supported herself by grabbing on to the Ace with her left arm as well. Marika yelled a warrior's shout and ran with the Ace, slamming her to a tree.

The Ace was still being burned, but the Ace kept going, headbutting Marika.

Marika didn't let go.

Then...

A halberd stabbed the Ace's body, A Scimitar too, and a Trident, all stabbing the body of the Ace, piercing through.

Snow White, Deluge, and Inferno, stabbing the Ace from behind, unable to move because Marika was holding firm.

Mimi dealt the final blow, stabbing her scissors on the Ace's throat.

Marika could barely stand, and the Ace screamed in pain at last.

The three Magical Girls removed their weapons from the Ace. The Ace went limp.

Marika released her grip.

The Ace fell on Marika. Marika couldn't support the weight.

Both fell down together, the Ace lying on Marika's now exhausted and broken body, blood on the Ace's body, and blood on Marika's.

Marika breathed heavily, and her eye was swollen. Her right arm had a bone jutting out, and her entire body was bleeding, wounded, torn.

It was over...

...

...

...The Ace jumped up.

Snow White reacted fast, blocking with her halberd, but the Ace kicked the halberd away, a force so hard it sent Snow White flying towards a tree, slamming her entire body to it.

Next, the Ace roundhouse kicked Mimi, sending her flying as well.

Deluge attempted to stab the Ace with her trident, but the Ace dodged, and used Deluge's

momentum to grab Deluge from behind, using her as a meatshield.

Just in time for Inferno to swing her scimitar.

The Ace covered behind Deluge, and Deluge blocked Inferno's scimitar with her trident.

The two were stunned and the Ace kicked them both towards the rocks, Deluge slamming into Inferno as they crashed.

Inferno's exhausted body couldn't take it, and she instantly fell limp when Deluge crashed into her.

The Ace stepped over to Marika, who could barely open her eyes after all the punishment she took.

The Ace slammed her legs on Marika's face. She continued to stomp on her, as Marika bled, still grinning.

The Ace then crouched down, punching Marika. Beating up on her face over.

And over.

And over.

And over.

But then.

Ace's head suddenly flew off from her neck.

A halberd had decapitated her.

The wielder of that halberd, Snow White.

Body exhausted, eyes wide, face filled with anger and exhaustion.

The Ace, her head gone, had blood flowing from the neck stump, and still tried to swing around and attack.

Finally, she fell down, her body in spasms and struggling, before she finally didn't move.

Snow White placed her halberd down vertically, her breath seemed heavy, her eyes tired. She fell on one knee, supporting herself by holding onto it.

Fal knew, but he didn't dare say anything.

Snow White had just decapitated someone.

She had to save Marika.

The Ace wouldn't die.

She was going to kill Marika.

Save a life, by taking a life.

Though it wasn't her real body, that kind of action... That was a line Snow White didn't want to cross unless absolutely necessary.

And now, she's trying her best to mentally cope with the situation.

Her eyes wide.

One knee.

Breathing heavily.

☆ **Grim Heart**

“Your Ace failed.”

“She’s caused significant damage to them.”

“But she killed only one.”

“Then we try again.”

Grim Heart took out Umbrain.

Umbrain stared fearfully, she began crying.

Grim Heart had no idea what she was saying. Again, she didn’t care.

She knows that Umbrain seemed close with Lady Proud. Lady Proud’s dead now. If they needed to be close again, they’ll be close in the afterlife.

“Off with her head.”

The Joker brought down her scythe, Umbrain’s head rolled on the floor.

The deck was replenished.

52 once more.

☆ **Princess Deluge**

They had carried their wounded back to the hallways.

Filuru seemed to be crying in the corner, mourning the loss of her friend. Mimi was trying to repair Marika.

She seemed to be able to make her face look normal, but she also said that this changes nothing in terms of damage.

Still, the placebo effect could be in play. If you look healthy, you could somehow trick your brain that you are healthy.

She began setting Marika’s bones back into place, relying on a Magical Girl’s healing to hopefully get it better.

CRACK!

“Hngh... Okay... *cough*... Okay, I think I’m good...”

Marika was on the floor, her arms outstretched, her breathing was still rough and heavy, she’d taken a lot of punishment.

Deluge was with Inferno.

“Cherry and Quake are dead... I’m sorry...”

“How do you know?”

“Quake stayed behind to take care of the Ace of Spades... Cherry, I... When we entered the room, there was a lot of blood, and...”

Sakura Kagami.

She should have never been dragged into this.

Deluge wanted to turn back time, she wanted to prevent her from meeting Deluge. She wanted Sakura to be happy at school.

“What’s all this, Cherry?”

“I set mirrors all over the training rooms, the briefing rooms, and pretty much everywhere!”

“Okay? What for?” asked Deluge, laughing.

“Well...”

The mirrors immediately showed a landscape that was beautiful. The Forbidden City, New York, The Grand Canyon, Easter Island, The Pyramids.

“...I thought we could have some fun together! Besides, the training room’s *huge*! We could pretend that we’re somewhere else, haha!” said Cherry with enthusiasm.

“Guess that means we won’t ever need a vacation with you around, Cherry,” said Inferno.

“Ohh... I dunno, we might still want a vacation, right Quake?” asked Tempest.

“You just want to spend some time off,” said Quake, winking at Tempest.

It was so much fun.

Deluge loved her family. Now they were being...

...Now they were all being taken away.

Deluge hugged herself while sitting in a corner.

This was a way to wall yourself off from the dangers of mental stress. She can’t. She can’t believe that Quake and Cherry are dead.

If Cherry died, she’d be personally responsible.

They couldn’t die...

...They can’t die just like that.

They were her closest friends. Close friends don’t die like that, right?

Sometimes you forget that anyone can die, and when someone close dies, it hits you like a truck.

But to have two die in the same day, with possibly three...

...Deluge breathed hard.

She wanted the medicine.

She needed to be calm again.

She didn't want to break.

She can't break. She can't break. She can't break.

"Hey, Deluge," said Inferno, tapping her back.

"You okay?" asked Inferno, her face still wet with tears.

"Yeah, I'm just... I'm worried," said Deluge.

"I'm sad too, and..."

Inferno couldn't hold it in, and she hugged Deluge again. Deluge comforted her friend. She had to be the strong one.

Inferno had tried her best.

Deluge had to be the one to lead now. She had to be mentally strong.

She had to steel herself.

She had to find her friends.

The two of them joined in with the other Magical Girls. All of them tired and exhausted from all the fighting.

Inferno looked at Snow White, who glanced back.

"I'm sorry we had to meet like this, Akari..." said Snow.

"It's... It's okay."

There was a silence that permeated the room.

"Well, what the hell are you guys waiting for? Don't we have a plan or somethin'?" said Marika, still laying on the floor, coarsely breathing.

"We need to get out. We can't just fight them. If we escape, we have a chance to regroup with the Land of Magic," said Snow White.

"Isn't Grim Heart from the Land of Magic?" asked Mimi.

Filuru nodded, "She's from the Homeland Divisions. Would the Land of Magic even help us in that situation? I mean... she's pretty high up there."

"Of course they'll help us, Pon!" said a mascot character.

A mascot character. Just like those Anime shows.

The Pure Elements never really had one, but apparently they do exist.

"The Land of Magic isn't some monolithic society, Pon! It's comprised of individuals, people with agendas and objectives, but there's also rules, Pon! Grim Heart is clearly breaking the law, and the law is what keeps the Land of Magic together, Pon!"

"What if they don't help us?" asked Filuru.

"Even the most corrupt individuals within the Land of Magic has to obey the law when showing face, otherwise they'd lose their position, Pon! Grim Heart doesn't want us to

escape because she can't risk that, Pon!"

"The messages... Fal, the texts. We all got the texts right?" said Snow White.

"Yeah. Wait, are you saying they lured us in here to be killed?" asked Filuru.

"I don't think so, Pon! I don't think the plan was to kill people. I don't even think the plan was to fight with the princesses, Pon!"

"Look at who was sent. A former jailer, ex-Mao's school, a Foreign Affairs leader, even me. I think... whoever's sending the messages is looking for Magical Girls that are powerful. I think they're not trying to get us to kill each other, I think they're trying to get us to fight Grim Heart," theorized Snow.

"That's assuming Grim Heart didn't get the message as well," said Filuru.

"Right. I can't read her. That's the problem," said Snow White.

"Wait, read her?" asked Deluge.

"Haven't you guys... *huff*... realized it... The Magical Girl Hunter is... *huff*... a mind reader... That's why she calls the shots... *cough*" said Marika.

"Marika, you need to rest," said Mimi.

"Wait. Magical Girl Hunter?" asked Inferno.

Snow White glanced at her,

"Koyuki... You have a title? You hunt... Magical Girls?" asked Akari.

"Oh yeah! *Cough*... Haven't you heard? This is *Snow White*! She's a big deal, y'know? Survived a battle royale, without killing anyone... *cough*... Took down... 20 Magical Girls all by herself! If you're an evil Magical Girl, she'll come for you, and she'll utterly destroy you... *hehe*... *cough*"

Marika grinned at Inferno.

Inferno looked at Snow White with a look of awe.

"Akari, I..."

"That's *so cool!!!*" said Inferno.

"What?"

"Koyuki!? You do this for a living?"

"Um..."

"No way... Not Koyuki. No way! I remember you in elementary, you were so... whimsical, always going on about being a Magical Girl, always watching those shows, always happy. You cry when people fought!"

Snow White's cheeks blushed with embarrassment. She chuckled a bit and smiled.

"That's the first time she's smiled in ages, Pon!"

"Oh, I could tell them so much about your childhood, Koyuki," said Inferno as she sat next to Snow White, wrapping her arms around her neck.

“I’d rather not, haha,” said Snow White.

“Wow... I’m kinda proud actually. You grew up a lot, Koyuki! Wow! I’m... actually kinda inspired.”

“You should be... *cough*... She’s a big deal y’know?”

“You need to teach me some things, Koyuki. You really do,” said Inferno.

Snow White smiled. She nodded.

She looked at the others, her face serious again.

“We have to focus on the now, though. We can’t beat Grim Heart like this, but I have a feeling beating her doesn’t mean physically beating her.”

“Spoilsport... *huff*”

“We need to escape, report to the Land of Magic.”

“That’s going to be hard. I think that the password to the facility’s been changed,” said Deluge.

“So what’s this about a password?” asked Snow White.

“If the password’s changed, like I said, we can’t go out. They have full control of the facility, I doubt they’d leave it unprotected.”

“Doesn’t one of those Shufflins know... *huff*”

“No. Shufflin doesn’t know. I don’t think any Shufflin except the original would know.”

“Can we dig out?” asked Filuru.

“We’re underground,” said Inferno.

“Then dig *up*... you guys seriously need to... *cough*... learn geometry.”

“We can’t dig, the rooms are built for damage. Can your flower beam thing pass through?” asked Inferno.

“No...” answered Marika.

Fal scanned the walls.

“Some kind of power dampener here, Pon. Seems that powers are weakened slightly while we’re in the facility,” said Fal.

“That’s because we didn’t want to destroy the facility while we’re training, so the Professor made some dampeners,” said Inferno.

“That explains why I can’t hear the hearts of people outside the facility,” said Snow White.

“At this rate, not even a Daisy Beam could disintegrate the walls fully, Pon!”

“Daisy Beam? You mean Magical Daisy?” asked Deluge.

“Yes, Pon!”

“Wait... Magical Daisy is *real*?” asked Inferno.

“...She is, Pon. So are many other Magical Girl Anime shows,” said Fal.

“Whoa...” said Inferno.

“Alright, we’re runnin’ out of options,” said Marika. She ate a seed, and grew it fast. A strange green fruit dropped out.

Marika grabbed the fruit and she began licking it.

Afterwards, she slowly stood up, supporting herself by grabbing the wall.

She threw the fruit to Inferno.

“Lick that,” said Marika.

Inferno almost put it in her mouth,

“NO, don’t eat it!” said Marika.

Inferno tilted her head.

“That’s a healing fruit. You lick it, okay? Lick it. It’ll remove the pain, it’s some kind of painkiller of some sort. It tastes pretty good, but don’t eat it.”

“What happens if I eat it?” asked Inferno.

“Well... you really don’t wanna know...” said Marika.

Inferno nodded slowly and began licking the fruit. Afterwards, they passed it around, each Magical Girl taking a turn.

“The effects aren’t permanent, and you kinda have to let your body heal a bit, but it’s enough to be a temporary healing agent, and a painkiller,” said Marika.

They all nodded.

“Alright, if we can’t get out, we’ll just have to beat the password out of those two, right?” said Marika.

“I can’t read Grim Heart, but the original Shufflin might also know the password, so I’ll need to get to her,” said Snow White.

As if on cue, the door opened.

Everyone’s eyes gasped, a lot of them were shocked, and most of them are also afraid.

Four Spade Shufflins.

Jack.

Queen.

King.

Ace.

“Oh... This’ll be fun,” said Marika.

How did they get back? They can revive? They’re still there... It took six of them to kill the Ace of Spades last time.

If she's unkillable, then... it's only a matter of time before Ace kills all of them.

Snow White tackled both princesses and screamed.

“GET BACK! TAKE COVER!”

Filuru, Mimi, and Marika saw a tiny ball thrown towards the center of the Shufflins.

Marika tackled Mimi and ducked, Filuru zoomed out by using her threads.

The Shufflins looked at the ball.

It wasn't a ball...

BOOOM!!!!

A large explosion rocked the hallway, the flames almost reaching the Magical Girls, but luckily, most of them had been warned by Snow White.

Deluge's ears are ringing.

She couldn't hear anything.

She tried to focus, Snow White was holding them both down, covering them.

Deluge looked back, she saw Ace Shufflin, burning, still standing, while the others were bloodied and killed.

The Ace walked slowly, her body was charred and mostly wounded.

Then.

Whoosh

A knife stabbed Ace in the forehead.

Another knife flew into Ace's head again.

Another knife, perfectly thrown to pierce the other two.

Another knife, thrown to Ace's throat.

Ace fell backwards, gagged, and finally died.

The Magical Girls looked back, and where they once were, were a group of dead Club Shufflins. Each of them had a throwing knife stuck to their forehead.

Standing in the pile, was a clown.

She was waving both hands happily, jumping around in joy.

Filuru was the first to talk, “Stuntchica? You're alive?”

Snow White's face was that of confusion.

Wait, who was this clown?

“Where have you been, Pon?”

Stuntchica the clown put a single index finger on her mouth, shushing, then she pantomimed a giggle as she placed one hand over her mouth.

INTERLUDE

☆ **Pythie Frederica**

Pythie had gone to the inn where she had met 7753.

She prepared some tea and healing herbs, and rented a room at the inn.

The innkeeper, an old, toothless woman, let her be.

Pythie had never really played video games. Games are entertainment after all, and for Pythie, the sight of a Magical Girl was entertainment enough for her.

Also, games tend to immerse you in a fantasy world.

Pythie was already living in one.

Still, Pythie realized that games are actually quite important in your life. It does provide your brain with visual stimulation, and can exercise the brain.

Not to mention, her apprentice, Keek, loved video games.

So Pythie knew a bit about games, even if she hasn't played one before.

That old role-playing game where you find four crystals to save the world.

That adventure game where you play as a pirate in some island.

That simulation game where you play god with a household of people.

That strategy game where you play as a general of two world powers.

Even that elf, Cranberry, had her mascot, Fav, create a social game to attract the teens to become Magical Girls.

Pythie needed to get on with the times.

Plenty of games that Pythie has seen, though none that she had played before.

Now, however, she was having quite some fun playing a game. This game was set in real life, though, and the objective was simple.

Get everyone to work together.

Why was that so hard? Pythie remembered that so many people wanted to work together in Cranberry's games, but people just had to ruin that.

Now it seems to be the opposite. People are trying to turn the players against each other, but Pythie had to make them work together.

"Are you doing alright in there, dear?" asked the innkeeper.

"I'm fine, thank you," replied Pythie.

"Will you be needing the medicine soon?"

"Oh yes, please. The tea would be nice as well, thank you."

"Alright, dearie."

Pythie wrapped a strand of hair on her finger, and looked at her crystal ball. Now, the game can resume again.

CHAPTER 5

POKER GAME

☆ Grim Heart

Grim Heart had used up all her Spades and Clubs.

In battle, Spades were most definitely her number one soldiers. An army on its own, the Spades would be the one she would send first.

The Clubs are number 2. They can't beat a Spade of the same rank, but they are still useful thanks to their stealth capabilities.

Surely an assault led by the entire army of Spades and Clubs would succeed, no?

So why is it that the camera says otherwise?

Just from the edge of her eyesight was the monitor to the hallways. What was once a room full of tired and exhausted Magical Girls was now filled with them retracing their steps.

The Spades and Clovers, all lying dead in the room.

There was no way that Grim Heart would send Hearts or Diamonds to the fight.

The Diamonds were more useful in trying to understand how this facility works. She needed them for that.

The Hearts were nothing but cowards, though they are resilient.

They both lack the combat knowledge that Spades and Clubs possess.

Yet, the Spades and the Clubs were all destroyed.

"Was it a trap?" asked Grim Heart.

"Perhaps," answered Joker.

That wasn't an answer that Grim Heart was happy to hear.

She was furious.

"If I may, my liege. We need to change our strategy," suggested Joker.

"What do you suggest?" asked Grim Heart.

Even she knew when things were getting too complicated. At this rate, she won't be able to restock Shufflin's deck all the time.

Even Grim Heart knew when she was beginning to get cornered.

However, she also knew that she was safe.

Grim Heart's magic is *To ignore those she deems rude*.

Her magic is passive, and she unless she allows it, nothing can touch her. Communication is blocked, and attacks won't harm her at all.

She is invincible, but also disconnected from the world at the same time.

Still, it's a small price to pay for ultimate power.

But now, leading an army, that wasn't a royal's job, that was the job of her right hand, her general.

So Grim Heart listened, she wanted to know Joker's plan.

"We have to start separating the main army into squads," said Joker.

"Won't they be weaker separated?"

"They'll be more vulnerable if clumped together, vulnerable to a wipe like last time. We need to rearrange our squads, separate them into multiple squads as well."

"And how would we rearrange them?"

"First, the Diamonds. We're spending too many Diamonds on a task that can be done with only a few. Understanding the system of this facility will only require the face cards. The rest of the diamonds can be grouped into the battle squads," said Joker.

"But they can't fight," argued Grim Heart.

"True, but they serve another purpose. The Diamonds are smart and intuitive. They can detect traps, find people, sense them. Their intuition and smarts will act as protection for the battle squads. It will prevent another wipe," said Shufflin.

"Very well..."

Grim Heart wanted to punish the Diamonds. How could they take this long to figure out how to work the base of a barbarian?

"That's not all. I suggest we also add Hearts patrolling alongside the battle squads."

"Hearts? What are Hearts useful for?"

"Decoys. Distractions. Meat shields. They are the most durable, so they will be ideal for leading the patrols."

At first it sounds like a strange plan, however, her general had suggested it to her, so Grim Heart figured the least she could do was trust her.

"There's also the matter of why they came here in the first place," said the Joker.

"Hm?"

"They're trying to crack the password that we set for the door. They plan to escape."

"The password is only interchangeable here, so we're safe," said Grm Heart.

"Perhaps. However, from the video archives, it looks like they have a Cyber Fairy. If that Fairy gets here, he could hack the entire system."

"Then we don't allow him to get here," said Grim Heart.

"Easier said than done. There are two paths to the Briefing Room, and they can take one or both of them at once. We'll need to guard both of them, that means separating the patrols even more. Two Shufflin each to guard the Forest and the Desert areas. This way,

we won't be caught by surprise," said Joker.

She seems to have planned this quite well. As expected of Grim Heart's lieutenant. Now, she only needs to listen to her plan.

To execute that plan, however, she needs to restock the deck.

That means executing one of the experimental bodies.

Grim Heart looked at her 4-D bag, and pulled out the two experimental bodies trapped there. The wind body was crying and crying, and the earth body was trying to comfort her.

Grim Heart reached out for the wind body, but the earth body went in front of her.

So the earth body is willing to be sacrificed first. It doesn't matter who will be sacrificed to make this plan worked.

It pains Grim Heart to sacrifice an experimental body, but so long as she has even one, she'll be able to continue forth.

As she looked at the earth body, she saw that the earth body kept staring at the wind body, smiling, as the wind body cried and spoke. The earth body also spoke something to the wind body, though Grim Heart couldn't understand anything.

Grim Heart took the earth body and placed it in front of her, on her knees, hands tied by magic. Quite embarrassing.

"Off with her head!"

Joker approached the earth body.

She raised her scythe, and as she brought it down towards the earth body, the earth body only smiled at the wind body, while the wind body cried and cried.

Barbarians.

☆ **Fal**

The group had to keep retreating and going back.

The wounded can't keep fighting like this.

Every time the group encountered a new door or a hallway, Snow White would sense the presence of the Ace of Spades, which meant that they had to turn back and hide.

It's clear now that no matter how hard they try, the Ace won't die. It seems like the other card soldiers won't die either.

That meant that their fight back then was meaningless.

They can't hope to waste energy and resources trying to kill someone that keeps coming back again and again.

This is ridiculous, how do they beat someone like her?

If Ace of Spades only had one life, it would be possible.

Now the Ace has reduced these combat veterans to running and hiding as a group. They're

all trying to avoid the monster.

They had to regroup, recuperate, and plan ahead.

According to Princess Deluge, the monitors in the briefing room are able to see almost any room they're in.

The cameras were located somewhere in the ceiling, and has a full vision of each and every training room, which means it's harder for them to hide.

The team decided to head towards the water room, where Deluge can use her magic to evaporate the mist, blocking line of sight from the ceiling camera.

This way, they shouldn't be able to tell where they were, so long as the mist is natural enough, and doesn't seem like something being controlled by magic.

As extra security, Filuru and Stuntchica worked together, with Filuru laying movement-based mechanical traps, that triggered grenades, courtesy of Stuntchica.

The Magical Girls were exhausted. Only Filuru was able to stand up and watch her threads. The rest were either sitting down or laying down.

Even Marika, who arguably had the most physical strength out of all of them, was on her back, still not fully healed against her fight with the Ace.

"So tell me... Why is she here again?" asked Marika, pointing at Stuntchica.

Snow White couldn't exactly give an answer either.

Stuntchica was a mystery. Her actions really do speak louder than her words, because she doesn't even say anything.

Can she not speak, or does she not want to speak?

Communication with her is harder than the rest. Still, Snow White shouldn't have a problem with it, since she can read minds.

But she does have a problem, because Stuntchica's mind isn't exactly straightforward either.

Snow White approached Stuntchica, and Stuntchica looked at her with a tilted head.

"The explosion earlier. That was you, right? How?" asked Snow White.

Stuntchica pulled out some grenades from her cuffs, and placed it between her fingers, waving it in front of Snow White.

"But where did you get it? And where were you when we were all attacked?"

Stuntchica tried a variety of gestures. The best meaning that Snow White could have is that Stuntchica was hiding somewhere, and came out when her friends were in danger.

"But those grenades aren't normal grenades. To take out something that strong, those has to be infused with magic, far more than normal," said Snow White.

The only Magical Girl that can enhance these weapons would be Calamity Mary, and she's dead, so the only other explanation is some kind of intervention from the Land of Magic.

That, or Stuntchica stole them.

Meaning that Stuntchica is either working for or against the Land of Magic, either way, she's in the midst of this conflict somehow.

Perhaps she's working with someone, but whoever that is, Snow White couldn't tell, partly because Stuntchica couldn't tell.

Every question that she had no answer to was answered only with a tilt of her head, innocently looking at Snow White.

After a while, Snow gave up. She wasn't giving any answers, and Snow couldn't force any answers either.

"Is she going to be trouble, Pon?"

"I don't know."

"She did save your life, Pon"

"Yeah, but still..."

"Best not look a gift horse in the mouth, Pon."

"I know I shouldn't question her after she saved us, but I just don't trust her as much as I do everyone else. Something's off, she's working for someone, but she doesn't even know who."

"Maybe she's something like Shufflin, Pon?"

"I don't know, Fal... I really don't know."

"Will she be a problem, Pon?"

"Maybe, but she shows no threats... to us, at least."

"So she's still okay, Pon?"

"For now."

☆ **Princess Deluge**

What time is it outside? Is it nighttime? Deluge already lost track. It's been so long that she's spent in here, she barely kept track of the time anymore.

If she hasn't come home, her parents might call the police.

It's not like they'd find her here, regardless.

Deluge remembered when Cherry brought them all to space.

No, not in real life, but through the mirrors she installed on the briefing room. In break time, she brought them to see the wonders of the universe.

They laughed, it's like being in a movie, with you able to visualize yourself in it.

Cherry laughed too. She liked outer space. It's huge, and large, and she wanted to experience the beauty of it.

But now Cherry couldn't laugh.

Deluge couldn't turn back time, she couldn't stop Cherry from joining her, she couldn't save Cherry.

She couldn't save her friends.

Everyone was dying all around her. What kind of Pure Element is she?

What's she supposed to do?

What does the world expect her to do?

How is she supposed to deal with all this?

There was no way out, why isn't there a way out? Is she forced to make her own way out?

The mist concentrated on Deluge, she couldn't see outside the mist, and nobody could see her either.

When she's at her worst, walling herself off from others gives her a chance to think. Normally, she does this by hugging herself.

But now, the mist is also blocking her off physically.

A hero who couldn't save her closest friends isn't a hero.

Deluge didn't even join Quake and Inferno when they fought. Maybe they could've won if she was there.

Why does Deluge feel weak? She wasn't as badly damaged as the others.

Why is she so mentally weak? Look at the others.

Look at Inferno and Snow White, who were only a few years older than her. They were keeping it together.

Deluge can't be this weak, she can't let herself be this weak. She can't be the weak link.

She had to be strong.

She knows this. As long as her friends are here, she had to strengthen her mind.

Strengthen her mind.

Strengthen her mind.

The mist kept getting thicker...

"Hey, Deluge!"

The mist pulled away.

It was Inferno.

She threw a strange fruit towards Deluge. It was green in color, still ripe and juicy. Although, part of it seemed sticky with liquid.

"Lick that, it helps," said Inferno.

This was the fruit that Marika produced to heal wounds.

"I'm not hurt, though," said Deluge.

“Can’t hide your feelings, Deluge. The fruit calms you down too. It’s not just a physical healer, it mentally heals you too,” said Inferno, sitting next to Deluge.

Deluge looked at the fruit.

“After I licked it, I also felt like I can use Luxury Mode again, so it looks like that fruit has some magic regeneration too, just don’t overdo it,” said Inferno.

“Really?”

If this fruit can calm her down.

Deluge licked the fruit, the taste was bitter, but there was also a sense of calmness when she tasted it.

Her energy felt like it rose as well.

Also why is this fruit wet again?

“Oh... sorry but, I licked it before,” said Inferno.

“Ah, that explains it. So your plan was to indirectly kiss me the whole time,” said Deluge smiling.

“Hah! Not exactly, but if you put it that way, then this is technically my First Kiss”.

“Mine too. Never thought it would be with you, Inferno.”

“Hey, I’m not that bad. Besides, you can brag to people that you actually got a first kiss now, right?” winked Inferno.

Deluge made an exaggerated flirtatious face, and blew a kiss towards Inferno, blowing off her hand as she did so.

“PFFFTHAHA, that was unnecessarily cheesy!” said Inferno laughing.

“What!? You don’t think that was good enough?”

“Oh my, Deluge. So young, so much to learn. If that was your best, no wonder this was your first kiss,” said Inferno chuckling.

The both of them laughed together, forgetting their troubles for the longest time.

Inferno was always the one that was the most energetic of the group. She’s the one trying to cheer everyone up. She and Cherry.

Deluge wished she could be like that.

Maybe this fruit will raise her spirits. Deluge kept licking it, feeling more power and strength grow into her.

“Hey, don’t lick too much, okay? I don’t know what happens, but Marika says it’s bad.”

“Don’t worry. Oh, and Inferno”

“Yeah?”

“Thanks... for coming, and being here. Thanks a lot,” said Deluge.

Inferno nodded, smiling at Deluge.

Deluge smiled as well, finally smiling, and looked back at Inferno, with eyes full of hope.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

“Why did you come down here, Marika?”

“Cause there’s gonna be fighting”

“You may be crazy but you’re not stupid. I know you’re not. This underground place isn’t suitable for you, you know you get weaker without sunlight right?”

“Who cares, as long as I can keep fighting”

“You were almost *killed* last time, Marika. You’re not even able to sit down properly. You need to slow down, the next fight’s going to be even deadlier if you keep this up,”

“All the more reason for me to be here, right? Deadlier the fights, the better the fights... hehe”

Why is she so stubborn?

For all the years that Mimi has known her, Marika was always this hotheaded. She was always looking for the next challenge, the next battle.

Despite everything that will happen to her, she’ll still be in high spirits.

Deluge and Inferno were chatting it up, with Marika’s green fruit. Mimi doesn’t know what exactly is in that green fruit, but she hoped that it didn’t contain whatever it is made Marika battle-hungry.

At least don’t poison the children.

Snow White was talking to Fal, probably doing something important. Strategizing.

Stuntchica was... Stuntchica.

Mimi decided to head over to Filuru.

She sat next to Filuru, still standing and watching her threads.

“You okay?” said Mimi.

Empty words, nobody was okay in this situation.

“Yeah. Just keeping watch.”

“Want to switch? I’m not hurt, I can take shift.”

“No, this job’s for me. I’ve done worse.”

Filuru smiled, but Mimi knew that it was an empty smile as well. While they’re in this situation, none of them can relax, despite everyone trying.

Everyone has to keep watch, and everyone has to keep wary of any surprises that the enemy has in store for them.

Filuru’s smile turned into a serious look.

She looked at Mimi,

“Someone’s coming.”

The door to the training area opened, and in response, everyone looked across to the source of the sound.

From the mist, you could only see a silhouette. A silhouette of a Magical Girl carrying a spade-like spear.

The Magical Girl stepped forward, and in doing so, she triggered the traps that Filuru had set before.

Five Magical grenades, set by Stuntchica, fell as their pins were pulled, surrounding the Magical Girl in the mists.

The explosions were so loud that the other Magical Girls had to cover their ears, lest they be deafened by the sound.

After the blast, Deluge lessened the mist, and the scene was clear.

The Magical Girl was still standing.

The mark on her robe.

Ace of Spades.

But how? The grenades would be overkill to almost anyone. How did the Ace still remain after all of that?

Then they saw it.

Bodies, all of them Shufflin.

Hearts Shufflin.

The Ace wasn’t the one that they saw in the silhouette, it was one of the Hearts Shufflin. The Shufflins are learning!

The Ace ran forward, and Filuru ran to meet it.

Snow White reacted fast, running over to Filuru as well.

But the Ace did something that no one expected.

No one except Snow White,

“FILURU!” screamed Snow White, just a second before the Ace of Spades threw her spear. The spear that was thrown straight towards Filuru’s chest.

Filuru heard Snow’s warning, and instinctively twisted her body.

The spear missed its target, but the sound of flesh tearing was still heard, and Filuru lost all her body strength as her arms instinctively gripped on the gash in her stomach.

Her charge caused her to still move into Ace, and with Ace of Spades’ bare hands, she grabbed Filuru in the neck.



Filuru struggled to breathe, the Ace looking at her with cold, dead eyes. Snow White rushed in, and took a swing with the Ace using her halberd. The Ace threw Filuru away, and caught the halberd with her other arm. Filuru rolled away, screaming in pain at the wound that she received.

The Ace used leverage on Snow's halberd to force Snow White's movements, easily allowing her to punch Snow White, landing hits on her. Punching her, kneeing her, elbowing her.

Snow White was forced to let go of the halberd, and the Ace tried to use it against her. However, the halberd was then strangely yanked away by something.

No, someone.

Filuru's threads pulled the halberd away from the Ace of Spades, and right into Snow White's hands again.

Snow White ran from the Ace, she knew it was impossible to take her on one-on-one. Mimi acted fast, and grabbed Filuru.

Stuntchica threw her grenades at the Ace, but the Ace rolled away. At the very least, the Ace rolled in the opposite direction of the team.

Everyone ran, and even Marika had to follow them this time, since she was in no strength for a straight up battle.

Mimi looked down at Filuru, who was moaning in pain.

She saw what Filuru was doing. Filuru was stitching her wounds, while being held by Mimi's arms.

Wait... she's not stitching the wound...

...The wound was deep, it had pierced her organs.

She's stitching her organs to prevent a fatal wound.

"Filuru! Are you okay!?" asked Mimi.

"Hngh! Ngh... Don't worry about me, please... My threads don't hurt just... just... lemme focus... Gah..."

"MARIKA! WHERE'S YOUR FRUIT?" yelled Mimi.

Deluge passed the fruit to Mimi, who offered it to Filuru's mouth.

"Lick this, now. It'll ease the pain!" said Mimi.

Filuru licked the fruit, and she groaned while still stitching her wounds.

"Ngh... Okay... Slightly less painful but still... Ngh... Painful."

"Keep it together, okay, Filuru?"

Stuntchica spread her arms out wide as she ran with the group. She waved her arms around and spread them as wide as possible.

Inferno looked at Stuntchica, "I THINK SHE'S TRYING TO TELL US SHE'S OUT OF GRENADES!"

"We need to retreat!" said Snow White, as the group ran from the Ace.

"Hey, are we always gonna run like this, or are we actually plannin' on fightin' back!?" asked Marika.

“Don’t worry, we’re fighting back,” said Snow White with a determined look.

Marika grinned and slapped Snow White’s back,

“I knew I could count on ya, Hunter”

☆ Shufflin

The 2 of Hearts has come back from her scouting.

Shufflin has felt it. She lost 8 bodies just then. All of them were Hearts. It looks like anything that’s within 10 of Hearts or below won’t last against the grenades.

The Jack of Hearts survived the grenade blast, meaning that she should be enough for the attacks against the enemy.

Still, the enemy didn’t spam their grenades, meaning that it was a limited resource. Since the enemy didn’t chase the Ace of Spades, it means that they probably ran out of grenades as well.

If they ran out, then Joker can send in her army of Spades.

Grim Heart’s orders were to attack them, and Shufflin wouldn’t want to disappoint her. Grim Heart can get extremely angry, and when she does, Shufflin dares not approach her.

Just then, the 3 of Diamonds entered the room, with a report from the monitor screens that they saw.

Shufflin saw it herself.

It seems there’s an ice wall blocking the path. A large one, blocking the entire room. With the mist, presumably caused by the experimental water-type body, Shufflin couldn’t see what they were planning behind that ice wall.

Destroying the ice wall would be simple, but it’s what lies behind it that worries her.

Of course, the training room can be entered from two sides, so Shufflin could always attack the other way, bypassing the ice wall entirely.

But Shufflin didn’t know and couldn’t see what they were planning. If they had a trap laid out in the corridors, then Shufflin couldn’t risk losing the Ace of Spades again.

She only had one experimental body left to restock, and Grim Heart needs one experimental body alive.

Shufflin ordered the Spade army to stand ready on the ice wall, and to figure out how to best destroy it.

In the Water Training Area, there was a large lake surrounding the area, which the Water body would use to train.

Princess Deluge.

She would be most powerful in this Training Room.

The other Training Rooms, Desert, Rocky, and Forest Areas all contributed to the increase of strength for each Experimental Body.

If Diamonds could figure out more control of this facility, Shufflin could cut off the water supply to the main rooms entirely.

As the Spades moved into position, suddenly, Shufflin heard a crack in the ice wall.

Why is it breaking? They wouldn't destroy their only barrier, would they?

When the ice cracked, Shufflin stood up from her chair in disbelief.

☆ **Princess Inferno**

First, Deluge had built a dam, by freezing the water built up so that it creates a large ice wall, preventing entry.

Then, Deluge had stored up the remaining water as a large volume, ready to be flooded when the signal was given.

Filuru was in the corner, as the group tried to keep her hidden and safe while she recuperates.

"So, wait, Koyuki... back up here, the plan is to go to the Briefing Room?" asked Inferno.

"We go there, we find the password, we get back, we rush out, get you guys to safety," said Snow White in reply.

"How will we even find the password? I mean, I'm gonna try and see if I can change it from the Briefing Room, but what if there are Shufflins there, too?"

"Someone in that Briefing Room has to know the password. If they know, I'll know," said Snow White.

"Wait, what?"

"I've stolen passwords before, I can read their minds to do it"

"You WHAT?"

"This isn't my first time, Akari"

"This isn't your first time STEALING PASSWORDS?"

"No, it's not, and yes, it is IMPORTANT."

"I know, but... That's just... WRONG... somehow."

"We'll discuss this later."

"Hey guys, should I release the water now?" said Deluge.

"Wait for my signal!" said Snow White, focusing and concentrating.

They waited, and waited...

"NOW!"

Deluge released the ice wall, and a stream of water flooded the other side. The Spades army was instantly washed away by the large flood, and Deluge spent no time in riding the wave.

She controlled the water naturally, using it to jump higher than before, adding more water,

controlling the direction of the flood.

Deluge used her trident to launch a spout of water, propelling her towards the ceiling, where she then dived down straight to one of the Shufflin, piercing her in the chest.

When the Shufflins were inside the water, Deluge instantly froze over that part of the water as well, effectively fighting the Shufflins by preventing them from fighting.

Underwater, the Shufflins had to deal with water density, causing them to move slower, but Deluge controls water. She didn't have to deal with that. She was faster than the Spades underwater, elegantly swimming through them and making short work of them.

For the remaining Spades, Mimi and Marika went over to support her.

Meanwhile, Snow White, Inferno, and Stuntchica ran towards the Briefing Room.

Past the long corridors, there were no Shufflin. Past the Forest Room now.

"Duck and cover!" said Snow White, as the three of them narrowly avoided ambushes by Club Shufflin, standing guard in the Forest Area.

"Do we fight?" asked Inferno.

"NO! We keep moving!" said Snow White, slashing down a tree with her halberd, blocking the path of some chasing Shufflins.

Inferno sprouted flame from her body, burning the trees in her way, while Stuntchica simply jumped and pranced over the trees.

They passed the Forest Room at last, and are in the final stretch of the hallway.

No Shufflins there either.

"There's a couple of Magical Girls in the Briefing Room," said Snow White.

"More than a couple, Pon!" said Fal.

Inferno opened the door to the Briefing Room, but strangely, it was empty. Snow White was ready with her halberd, and Stuntchica with her throwing knives.

The three of them slowly made their way inside the room.

Inferno remembered going through the Briefing Room a million times, when she was just another Pure Element.

Now, it feels oddly nostalgic.

As they got further in, they saw a variety of Diamond Shufflin working on the consoles, as well as books and instruction manuals, and discarded chips and candy.

The Diamond Shufflins looked at them, and they screeched in fear, as they ran away, trying to escape.

Snow White focused, and focused.

"I can't pick up anyone other than these Shufflin. None of these Diamonds know the password either," said Snow White.

"So what do we do now, Pon?" asked Fal.

Inferno looked at the two of them, “I know how to work these things better than they do, I’ll find the password.”

“We’ll need to keep watch. I’ve got the entrance in case the Clubs break through the Forest Area. Stuntchica should keep watch here. Can I trust you?” asked Snow White to Stuntchica.

Stuntchica made a salute pose, and stood up straight like a cartoon soldier saluting her general.

“I’ll take that as a yes,” said Snow as she turned her back with her halberd at the ready.

Inferno headed to the console. She had to remember. She’s never really done this before, only Cherry’s taken the time to read the instruction manuals and really get a hang of this.

Inferno just hoped that she can make this work.

She’s familiar with what Cherry’s told her...

...Cherry.

Inferno couldn’t save her. Now Cherry’s gone.

No, don’t think about that. Now’s not the time.

Inferno looked at the history, she tried to find what the password was, and fast too. She couldn’t keep everyone waiting.

Deluge was fighting, Marika and Mimi were fighting.

Koyuki was guarding, was she fighting the Shufflins right now?

Inferno heard a kick behind her, and she heard a thump in the wall. Then...

...She felt heat in her back.

Not fire.

Not flames.

Pain.

Her legs felt numb. She couldn’t move. She felt weak. She fell down to the floor.

Her hands reinforced her fall, she saw a pool of blood forming from her abdomen. She could only hear faint screams from ahead.

Everything was blurry.

“AKARI!!!”

She turned around, she saw Stuntchica slumped to the wall, she must’ve been kicked.

Koyuki was running towards her, with her halberd, face furious.

Then, Inferno looked towards the corner of the room. She hadn’t noticed the corner before, but there were bodies.

Three girls.

One looked like she was from elementary, another looked to be in her 20s or so, and the

other was someone familiar...

...Quake?

They all had neck stumps.

They were all headless.

Inferno looked at her assailant at last. It was a Shufflin, but one she had never seen before. This one had a clown on her robes, smiling.

Smiling...

...The image was burned into her brain.

You...

...You killed them

...I'm going to kill you

...I'm going to kill you

...You're going to die

Power surged through Inferno. Everything slowed down. She went into Luxury Mode.

She always laughed when being told to go to training, but now she understood what all this training was preparing them to do.

In a life-and-death situation, Inferno needed to kill if necessary.

Now is no better...

She summoned her scimitar, the Shufflin brought down her Scythe, but Inferno blocked it, using all of her strength to do so. She blocked it, and she used her strength to disarm the Shufflin.

Behind the Shufflin, Koyuki slashed the Queen of Hearts with her halberd, but the Queen of Hearts just stood there. Koyuki had a shocked face.

Inferno deflected the Shufflin's scythe, and pierced her sword.

This... This was the true attack.

She pierced her scimitar straight through the Shufflin's chest. Screaming in anger as she did so.

Time still seemed to slow.

The Shufflin looked down at her wound. The scimitar in her chest.

The Shufflin held the scimitar, despite burning her arm to do so.

Then she began to understand... the Queen of Hearts...?

The Queen of Hearts kicked her away.

Her breath is fading.

Every blink felt like it could be her last.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHY ARE YOU HESITATING TO KILL HER?” she heard the Queen of Hearts.

“Because you told me to capture them *alive*!” replied the Shufflin.

Blink.

Darkness, and Inferno tried to breathe as well. She heard fighting.

She opened her eyes, Koyuki was getting slammed to the wall, beaten down by the Shufflin. Being punched over and over.

How long has it been, a few seconds?

Stuntchica’s arm moved.

Inferno blinked again.

She heard flashes, explosions, clashing, beating.

Everything was a blur in her head, she couldn’t process anything but noises... noises...

...She was being carried.

“Stay with me...” she heard a voice.

Inferno opened her eyes, Koyuki was doing her best to block attacks from the Shufflin. Koyuki was hurt as well. It’s harder when Inferno was slung on her shoulder.

Then Inferno saw Stuntchica rolling a grenade underneath Shufflin and the Queen of Hearts.

The Queen of Hearts noticed. “Joker! Grenade!”

The Shufflin looked down, and in that moment of confusion, Stuntchica kicked the Joker away from Koyuki, and pushed Koyuki and Inferno towards the entrance.

She waved goodbye, and saluted goodbye too, as she closed the door. Only a few seconds later, Inferno saw a huge flash of light, and a large explosion as Koyuki ran away.

Inferno closed her eyes.

Footsteps... Footsteps... Her world felt like it was shaking.

These were her last breaths.

“Hey... Hey, Koyuki...”

“Don’t talk, Akari,” said Koyuki.

No, she wasn’t Koyuki... She was Snow White, the Magical Girl Hunter.

“Koyuki, you’re... You’re the Magical Girl Hunter, right?” said Inferno with a smile, as Snow White carried her on both arms.

Inferno saw the hallways.

“We... We need to stop, I’m not... gonna make it this far... just... Koyuki, please,”

“No, don’t say that! Don’t you say that!”

“Koyuki... please”

Snow White knew that there was no help on the way. Even Snow White could tell. She stopped in an alleyway, her eyes filled with tears as she lay Inferno in a wall.

“...huff... Snow White... Koyuki... You’re the Magical Girl Hunter... So...”

“Akari, I’m not losing you too, you need to stay with me... Akari!”

“You need to... You have to... You need to make them all pay... You can’t let anyone get away... for all of this...” said Inferno, trying her best to speak.

Snow White hugged Inferno, and Inferno’s head was dumped into Snow White’s chest, as her friend was crying.

“You’ve grown so much... Koyuki, I’ve... I wish I could’ve met you again sooner...”

Inferno always wanted to run.

She felt free when she was running.

Now she just wanted to stop.

“Akari! Akari, no no, no no no no!”

She wanted to stay being hugged by Koyuki, she wanted to meet her Pure Elements, she just wanted to slow down now.

“No... No no, not again... Not again... Not you too... Akari!!! AKARI!”

She closed her eyes. Everything was disappearing. Sight, sound, soon, Inferno will disappear too.

Only her spirit would remain.

She heard Snow White crying, as she felt her best friend embrace her in her last moments. It was bittersweet, but Inferno knows that Snow White will be able to stay strong.

Isn’t that what made her a Magical Girl in the first place?

☆ **Grim Heart**

Grim Heart beat down on the Ace of Hearts.

She kicked her, punched her, threw her to a wall, as the Ace of Hearts just cried and cried.

How could this happen?

She had saved the Joker Shufflin in time by shielding her with her body. If not, that grenade would have definitely damaged Joker.

Joker had survived the stabbing by a powered-up Fire Body thanks to Joker having the Ace of Hearts’ durability.

She had avoided any detection thanks to having the Ace of Clubs’ stealth.

She knew exactly how her opponents worked as they fought her thanks to the Ace of Diamonds’ intelligence.

And she can back up her fighting skill against that so-called Magical Girl Hunter,

disarming her and matching her, thanks to having the Ace of Spades' fighting skill.

However, Joker was caught off-guard by two things.

She hesitated to kill the Fire Body due to Grim Heart telling her not to kill any Experimental Bodies until needed.

She was also caught off-guard by Stuntchica's suicide attack. Neither Grim Heart nor Joker anticipated a Magical Girl willingly sacrificing their life for others.

Barbarians...

...Now they don't have the Fire Body.

Because Joker wasn't controlling her troops, they were also disoriented, and they seemed to have lost the battle as well.

Outsmarted...

...Impossible.

Barbarians. All of them.

Grim Heart wanted to destroy everything, and kill them all. She forcefully took out the Wind Body from her 4-D bag.

The Wind Body was crying and crying, but Grim Heart threw her outside. The Joker kicked her and made sure she bowed down to Grim Heart.

"OFF! OFF WITH HER HEAD RIGHT NOW!"

The Wind Element seemed to be begging for her life. It didn't matter.

"You're sure," asked Joker.

"I didn't stutter."

Joker brought down the scythe. The Wind Body's head rolled down the floor, and Grim Heart felt pleasure at last.

She calmed down.

Power was restored. She was in control again.

"...You realize we have no Experimental Bodies left, right?" said Joker.

"If we are missing *any* of our Shufflin, our plans can't work."

"Then I guess it couldn't be helped, my liege."

But now lies another problem. There was only one Experimental Body left. The Water Body. Grim Heart must absolutely retrieve this body.

Snow White has stopped and moved on. The Fire Body is dead.

She has to retrieve the Water Body, otherwise this entire thing will be for nothing.

Furthermore, there was no one left to restock Shufflin.

Her next move must be successful.

☆ Filuru

Snow White came back with the body of Inferno, and approached Deluge. Upon seeing it, what was once a celebration of victory became a silent mourning.

Deluge took the body and went over to the corner of the room. She sat there and created a mist, blocking herself from anyone.

Filuru, however, was unable to move much.

She had been given a sleeping bag by Snow White and place where no one could easily find her, as she stitched her wounds shut.

She also had Marika's fruit, which she would lick if she felt pain.

It acted like a painkiller. It would numb the pain for a bit, but after a while, it would just come back again.

Filuru could hear the voices of people discussing. She took a look.

She noticed that nobody called Deluge. Nobody dared to call Deluge. That girl's spirit has been broken beyond belief.

The plan didn't work.

They don't know the password, and now they lost both Stuntchica and Inferno. Filuru's in no shape to fight, Marika is recovering.

They're in worse shape than before.

"So, we have nothing?" asked Mimi.

"Well, I managed to read something," replied Snow White.

Snow White, Marika, and Mimi were discussing near Filuru, perhaps to make it easier for her to listen to them.

"I managed to read Joker Shufflin's mind. It's the only mind I *could* read at the time," said Snow White.

"There's a Joker Shufflin?" asked Mimi.

"It looks like she's the highest ranked Shufflin of them all, Pon!" said Fal, who appeared behind Snow White.

"Right. I picked up several things that Joker Shufflin was trying to hide. First off, it looks like if we can defeat the Joker, we defeat the entire Shufflin army," said Snow White.

"Perfect! That's simple," said Marika.

"Joker Shufflin also doesn't know the password, meaning the only person who knows it is Grim Heart. I also managed to pick up on Grim Heart's power by reading the Joker. Grim Heart can choose who she communicates with, others won't understand her," said Snow White.

"So she chooses who she can talk to? That's her power?" asked Mimi.

"Not exactly. She also can affect combat. I couldn't hurt her at all. My best guess is that her power is the ability to allow interaction. I couldn't read her because she didn't let me.

It's like when I was in Keek's world, sort of," said Snow White.

"Even Keek had limitations if she wasn't in her world, Pon! How are you supposed to beat something like this, Pon?"

"We don't have to defeat her," said Snow White.

"Pon?"

"Joker also revealed one more thing. Grim Heart's goal. Joker was afraid to kill Inferno, despite easily being able to do so. I think they want the Pure Elements alive. Meaning we don't have to defeat them in combat," said Snow White.

"Oh... I get it," said Mimi.

"Huh? I don't," said Marika.

"There's other ways of winning. If we get Deluge to safety, if Deluge can escape the facility, Grim Heart loses. The Man-Made Magical Girls. She's after them. She's probably killing us so we won't be able to tell the secrets. If it leaks, Grim Heart loses. We just have to find the password and escape," said Snow White.

"...Hey."

Deluge approached the group, her expression being somber and full of regret. She didn't cry, but she was deeply affected by Inferno's death.

"You said that Inferno was killed by this Joker?" asked Deluge.

"...Yes. Deluge, I know how this feels," said Snow White.

"I'm going to kill her."

"Deluge..."

"She killed Inferno, Quake, she probably killed Tempest and everyone that was kidnapped already. She deserves to die," said Deluge.

"It's not that simple."

"Is it? If we kill her, we kill all the Shufflin, right?"

"Going after the Joker is suicidal," said Snow White.

"Don't they want me alive?"

"They're not going to value your life over their own," said Snow White.

Deluge didn't look scared anymore. In the beginning she always seemed to tremble or hide herself.

Now something inside her must've... broken.

"Joker Shufflin was afraid of Grim Heart, because Grim Heart protected the Joker from Stuntchica's explosion. Her thoughts were that Grim Heart never needed to move, and if she moved, Grim Heart would be furious," said Snow White.

"What kind of attitude is that, Pon?"

"The attitude of a noble who wants their servants to do everything. She'll want to regain

the upper hand somehow. If I'm reading them right, her ego won't allow her to stand still anymore," said Snow White.

"What was... the Joker like?" asked Deluge.

"...Strong, smart, powerful. Harder than the Ace of Spades," said Snow White.

"Perfect! I can totally fight her!" said Marika.

"SHUT UP!" said Deluge.

Her sudden outburst caused everyone to jump back a bit. Deluge had never been like this before.

"Deluge, I know how losing someone close to you feels," said Snow White.

"...Do you? Do you really?" said Deluge with eyes full of hatred.

"I've been there,"

"What did you do?"

"I held on, Deluge. That's what we do. We move on and we keep holding on to what makes us *us*! Don't lose out on that," said Snow White.

"If you could meet their killers, what would you do?" asked Deluge.

"I'd stick to what I believed in," said Snow White.

"I tried that. Now my friends are dead. The world doesn't work that way," said Deluge.

"That's exactly why we have to stand strong. The world isn't a pretty place, the people aren't going to give you a break, but you hold on. So don't give in yet, Deluge. That's not strength at all," said Snow White.

"Would you sacrifice yourself to bring them all back?" asked Deluge.

"Without a doubt," said Snow White.

"...Okay then. I'll try..." said Deluge.

Filuru wished she could contribute to the conversation, but her pain is making it hard for her to speak.

She wanted a job, but she got more than what she bargained for.

Maybe she didn't need a job, maybe working as a Freelancer would be fun.

Maybe the world may need Freelancers too, like Uttakatta and Kafuria.

Filuru realized something about herself as well. She never really wanted a job because of the money, or the fact that she can live in a nice place.

She was just lying to herself.

She wanted a job, she accepted this mission, she did all this...

...Because she wanted to feel needed. She wanted to be of some importance.

When Filuru realized this, everything made sense. The long working hours, the boring fact of standing still and keeping watch, the sudden loss when she was fired. The desire to

keep watch, lay traps, always taking up the task.

Because she felt needed.

Filuru gulped.

Was this a selfish desire? Was it something she shouldn't want. Isn't it selfish to want to be important?

Maybe she should stop fighting to be important, and start fighting so that people can survive, instead. So that people can keep being people.

Was her mind finally playing tricks on her? Is the pain making it unbearable? Or is Filuru finally understanding who she was all this time.

"I..."

That wasn't Filuru's voice.

That wasn't Snow White's, not Mimi's, not Marika's.

It was Deluge.

"I want to be a hostage," said Deluge.

"What?" asked Snow White.

"If they want me alive, use me as a bargaining chip. Save everyone. I'll go without a fight."

"Deluge..."

"You said you'd sacrifice everything to save your friends if you had the chance, right? Let me do the right thing," said Deluge.

That selflessness...

...Filuru felt like she couldn't compare to that...

...Deluge was a true Magical Girl. Filuru should be more like her.

"Please, Snow White. Let me do the right thing," said Deluge one more time.

The others looked at each other, and looked at Deluge's determined face.

INTERLUDE

☆ **Pythie Frederica**

"My, poor girl," said the innkeeper, putting tea on the table on Pythie's room.

"Yes, the poor girl has been through a lot, she did a good job," said Pythie.

"Well... let me know if you need anything, okay?" said the old innkeeper.

"Of course, thank you for your hospitality," said Pythie.

The innkeeper closed the door, Pythie began her treatment.

There were two beds in the room. One of them had a one-armed ninja in it, Ripple.

The other was empty.

There were a series of bandages and medicine on both sides of the bed.

Ripple was resting, she was covered in black soot and ash.

Pythie stroked her hair. Poor Ripple had done a good job, and had almost died doing so as well.

Upon Pythie's stroke, a small smile appeared on Ripple, who was still resting.

Yes, Ripple. You should rest. You did all you could.

"Bring me back," said a voice from the other side of the room.

Shiny, sparkling, beautiful hair.

Reflecting the lights of everything around her, a beautiful color that changes depending on the angle you view in.

Such lovely hair.

"Are you healed, yet?" asked Pythie.

"Thank you... for saving me, but... I need to head back," said the girl.

Pythie was in love with the idea of the Ideal Magical Girl. She also loved hair, and couldn't let the owner of such magnificent hair die.

So she intervened, of her own judgement. She had hoped that she could keep her here, for she doesn't know much of what's happening in that dreaded place.

That place where the bodies piled up, and death was certain. The world couldn't lose someone like that girl.

"Won't you reconsider?" asked Pythie.

"I won't," replied the girl.

"Why do you want to return to a place like that?" asked Pythie.

"Because I need to make things right. I need to save my friends."

"Even though you may not survive," asked Pythie.

"I don't care if I die... I need to save them..."

"Why?"

"Because I failed them, I caused all this, so I need... to make right by them, I need to fix this," said the girl, stepping forward, her wounds already seemed to be healed.

"You have such potential with you, I could help you grow it as well, you know," said Pythie.

"I don't need anyone's help for that. I'm perfectly aware of who I am, what I'm capable of, and my limits. I don't care if the world doesn't know me anymore, I just... I need to do what's right, so please... take me back," said the girl.

This was it.

This was an Ideal Magical Girl.

How could Pythie refuse...

Pythie took a sip of her tea. This Ideal Magical Girl may die. But she didn't care, so long as she was able to save people.

Reminded her of someone else.

How beautiful...

"Very well, I'll send you back," said Pythie.

"Thank you..." said the girl.

Pythie stroked Ripple's hair, as Ripple slept smiling.

CHAPTER 6

THE MAGICAL GIRL HUNT

☆ Grim Heart

Now Grim Heart must make her next moves carefully.

She's essentially run out of lives to restock the Joker. There are no more captured Magical Girls either.

Casualties are no longer an option.

She must perform her plan with all 52 Shufflin preferably alive.

She had listened to the Joker's plan, and that plan has failed.

Listening to a vassal didn't work, so now the noble must make their move. If the military is incompetent, then their king shall lead them.

Grim Heart must begin to plan on her own.

To do that, she needs information.

Joker came to her,

"The mist in the water room has cleared up?"

"Hm...?"

Grim Heart peered through the monitors. Sure enough, the area in the water room looked sunny, not misty.

The Magical Girls had created mist within the water room earlier, in an attempt to hide themselves, but why are they revealing themselves now?

Had there been a falling out? Some accident? What's the purpose?

Grim Heart saw all the Magical Girls, and the Water Body, tied up on the ground. The other Magical Girls were speaking something, Grim Heart couldn't understand.

The Diamonds Shufflin listened in, and the Joker stepped beside Grim Heart.

"If you can guarantee our safety, we'll deliver the Man-Made Magical Girl. We're willing to negotiate the trade," said one of the girls in a speaker.

"What did they just say?" asked Grim Heart.

"It looks like they want to negotiate, and they're offering the Water Body," said Joker.

"Negotiate the Water Body?" said Grim Heart out loud.

"That means they want to talk, meaning they're trying to parlay," said Joker.

"Bad idea," said Grim Heart.

"How so?" asked Joker.

“Because a parlay means a face-to-face meeting. They may stage a raid while we send a representative there. Every resource is crucial. Depending on who we send, they might kill the messenger, or they may come here. These are barbarians, they’ll do such things,” said Grim Heart.

“So we don’t negotiate with them?” asked Joker.

“That’s troubling as well,” said Grim Heart.

“How so?”

“If we allow them, they may either take the Water Body away, or find some way out,” said Grim Heart.

“Then we attack”

“I’ve had enough of your planned attacks, they don’t work, and if the Water Body kills herself defending her team, this will be for nothing,” said Grim Heart.

“It seems we’re at an impasse, my liege. What’s your plan of action, then?” asked Joker.

Grim Heart thought for a moment.

What would be troublesome?

The barbarians wouldn’t organize a peaceful parlay, that’s not how barbarians work. They’re barbarians, so it will be a trap.

Now that Grim Heart expected a trap, all she needs to do is find a way around it.

“We cannot send a Shufflin, even the Diamonds barely have the capability of speaking clearly, despite their intelligence,” said Grim Heart.

“Then should I parlay?” asked Joker.

“No, if it is a trap, you’ll die,” said Grim Heart.

“You lack faith in me, my liege,” said Joker.

“I lost faith when you failed me *thrice!*” said Grim Heart.

“Apologies... I didn’t mean it in that way,” said Joker.

“We have to play it safe, you are killable, I am not,” said Grim Heart.

“You’re suggesting...”

“That I go. However, I decide the terms, and I decide the location as well, otherwise I won’t negotiate.”

“I’ll relay it to them.”

Grim Heart took a look at the monitor.

“Not the briefing room, obviously. I also don’t want to negotiate with the Magical Girl Hunter. Her Cyber Fairy is a danger. The flower girl is not an option. She’s the most barbaric of them all. Find me someone weak,” said Grim Heart.

“The girl with threads?” asked Joker.

“She will be their representative. Her and her alone. No one else,” said Grim Heart.

“Very well. What else, my liege.”

“I want a full physical check of her person. No weapons, nothing concealed. She must agree to this, or we will not negotiate,” said Grim Heart.

“Anything else?”

“I will have a Shufflin escort, comprised of Hearts and Spades, with some Clubs watching over as well. You and the Diamonds will stay here and keep watch of the monitors,” said Grim Heart.

“Should they bring the Water Body?” asked Joker.

“They may, though I know that they won’t. We’re still not sure if they intend on giving her or not,” said Grim Heart.

“Very well, my liege,” said Joker.

“One last thing. I will have a large distance between myself and the negotiator. This cannot be refused. We will speak at a distance,” said Grim Heart.

Joker nodded.

She relayed the instructions to the group of Magical Girls, as Grim Heart sat on her throne, prepared to meet in the barbarians’ summit.

☆ **Shufflin**

After Grim Heart has left the room, it’s now up to Joker to control the playing field.

Grim Heart only negotiates, Joker had control of her army.

The flames in the Briefing Room have died down. The room was strong, probably designed to withstand the Experimental Bodies should they rebel.

Joker approached the monitors, she then switched it to the Water Room.

She commanded the Heart Shufflin to enter. The first step, take the negotiator. This would also serve as a trap indicator.

7 of Hearts entered the room.

Joker saw the target. Filuru, the needle and thread. Joker can mentally communicate with all her soldiers, but of course, her soldiers may not be able to actually communicate.

The Hearts in general were usually just scared, Joker could feel it.

Joker ordered the Hearts to call out Filuru. 7 pointed her finger at Filuru, and motioned for her to come towards her.

Filuru walked, it seemed like she was holding onto a side in her stomach, walking slowly and in pain.

Ah, this is why Grim Heart chose her. She’s the weakest link in the group.

Now for the physical check.

7 of Hearts was thorough, patting her down so that there are no strings, threads, needles, yarn, or any conventional weapon that she could use.

When 7 patted her wound, Filuru moaned in pain. It was stitched with threads, but still clearly hurt her. It won't heal that fast anytime soon.

Joker switched Monitors.

The Forest Room.

There, Grim Heart was sitting on her throne. She waited for the negotiations to begin.

Surrounding her were an army of Spades, and of course, an army of Clubs waiting, just in case. However, the Ace of Spades was not with Grim Heart.

The Ace of Spades was with Joker.

She stood beside Joker, waiting for orders.

Joker was smart too, she didn't want to leave the Briefing Room unguarded. In case of any sneak attacks, Ace of Spades and Joker could easily fend them off.

Though the Diamond Shufflin in the room might get casualties. Best not to think about that now.

Joker switched back.

It's time.

The 7 of Hearts motioned to Filuru. Filuru followed behind.

After a few minutes of walking, Filuru fell down in pain. This was the first reason Grim Heart chose Filuru. She could barely walk because of her injuries.

Several Hearts Shufflin helped her stand, and slung her over their shoulders.

Joker checked the Water Area.

The other Magical Girls need to be kept in check as well.

Marika Fukuroi.

Snow White.

Styler Mimi.

All were present.

The Water Body was hogtied. Rolled down to the ground, unable to move her hands and body. Everyone was there.

Now Joker can switch screens.

Filuru was nearing the negotiations room.

The second reason Filuru was chosen, was because Grim Heart knew her Magical Skill. Her powers include her needles and threads.

That much was already confirmed. If Grim Heart chose someone whose power she didn't know or was unclear of, then that would be inviting danger.

Filuru had already been searched, every part of her body had nothing. No weapons, no grenades.

Of course, it was impossible to completely remove her threads and needles, but Grim Heart knows this, and Filuru can't do much with it. Not in her current state.

...Why does Joker feel nervous?

She has everything completely under control, but she still feels nervous.

Joker switched to the Forest Area.

Filuru was stopped, around 30 meters away. A group of Spade Face Cards surrounded her, spears at the ready.

The Hearts Face Cards surrounded Grim Heart, their bodies willing to die for her.

Then it made sense.

It's because these were all Joker's last lives. There was no other sacrifices, there was no other way for Joker to come back if she fails this one.

If Grim Heart hadn't been so... so casual and indifferent about killing those Magical Girls.

If they only spent resources more wisely. Now Joker has to play it safe.

I'm a one-man army, she's the most powerful Magical Girl I've seen

Yet how can she be so foolish at times...

Focus. There's no point in thinking bad thoughts about my liege.

The Shufflin needs focus. Although they're autonomous, they work much better with Joker purposefully leading them.

The ones on the field lack any real intelligence, and are fearless, which can be a bad thing.

There's such a thing as being reckless due to lack of fear.

Tensions are rising.

One mistake from Filuru, and the Spades will stab her immediately. Now Joker only needs to wait.

Grim Heart released her magic.

"We may speak. Your terms, now!" said Grim Heart.

"...We'll give... Deluge... But you... guarantee our safety..." said Filuru, out of breath.

"Hand over the Water Body to the Briefing Room, and I shall consider your sins absolved. You may then leave," said Grim Heart.

Joker knew that wasn't what Grim Heart wanted. She'd kill them as soon as she had access to the Water Body.

Grim Heart just needed the Water Body delivered to her, and can't risk another Shufflin raid.

She needed all the Shufflin alive.

“How will you... guarantee safety? We need... the password to the exit... We can guarantee Deluge...” asked Filuru.

“I do not repeat myself, girl. I do not negotiate with barbarians. Consider yourselves unique, as this is the first time I will. I will say this once. You will hand me the Body, I will guarantee your safety,” said Grim Heart.

Filuru spoke, but the spade Shufflins threatened her to silence herself, bringing their spears ever closer to her neck.

It was too late. Grim Heart ignored her.

Perfect negotiations. Grim Heart moved her throne back to the Briefing Room, and Filuru was escorted away, and abandoned in the hallway.

Joker switched monitors.

The Water Area.

Something seems very off.

Everyone there didn't change, of course. However, there was also an ice wall blocking the path to the Briefing Room.

That ice wall was created before the Water Body was tied down, yet hasn't shown signs of melting, nor was it wet.

Meaning it's being kept there.

Meaning the Water Body has access to her powers.

Meaning the Water Body didn't use her powers to escape her captors.

Meaning they're still in cahoots.

Meaning that they never planned to give her in the first place.

Joker stood up.

She gave orders to the Shufflin.

Whatever these Magical Girls are doing, they clearly had a plan if they still agreed on sending Filuru in helpless, and Joker's not going to fall for it.

☆ **Princess Deluge**

The door to the Forest Room side opened.

In stepped a girl in a dress, knitted and threads.

Snow White.

Although clad in Filuru's outfit, this was indeed Snow White.

Now it's only a matter of speed.

Filuru was waiting in Snow White's form and outfit, ready with her bag.

“In the bag,” said Snow White.

Filuru, disguised as Snow White, went inside Snow's 4-D bag. It was the easiest way for Filuru to be carried, as she couldn't run at all, but she would be too heavy to be carried physically.

Deluge released her fake restraints.

They had already planned this ever since Grim Heart picked someone.

They knew they would never pick someone strong, and they knew Deluge was out of the question. Grim Heart picked Filuru instead.

Filuru, the weakest link. Sending her in would be suicidal.

So they exchanged Snow White for Filuru.

But they had to be fast. Mimi couldn't completely change Snow White and Filuru to match each other perfectly, so they had to improvise.

The face is the easiest, since Magical Girls' features such as their eyes, nose and mouth are almost similarly positioned.

Changing the color and shape of Snow and Filuru's pupils, as well as their hair. Then, giving Snow White a scar appearance in her belly, to mimic Filuru's wounds.

Their torso, skin color, complexion, and anything like that hasn't been changed. Snow White technically had a lighter shade than Filuru, but nobody will really notice if everything else looked the same.

Mimi changed their hairstyle too.

Costumes would be difficult to properly change, so the easiest way is for the two of them to switch outfits completely, physically wearing the other's outfit.

The disguise was not the best quality, but the face and hair were all that matters. It was the fastest way to switch the two.

Snow White was then sent to the negotiations room.

In order for Grim Heart to negotiate, she'll have to cancel her magic. Then, Snow White had a chance to read her thoughts.

Of course, Snow White asked for the password, because if there's one thing people will subconsciously do, is that their thoughts will usually focus on something they've been told.

Snow easily then read the password, and that was all she needed.

Now, they only had a limited amount of time before Grim Heart and Shufflin realize what happened, before they change the password.

Snow White had told her,

Winning doesn't always mean killing your opponent.

Winning doesn't always mean defeating your opponent in combat.

There are ways to defeat someone without even touching them, even if they think they're invincible.

She was right.

If Deluge escapes... If the world knew the truth... If Deluge doesn't get captured by Grim Heart...

They'll have won. Whatever Grim Heart came to do, she was after Deluge and her family. If Deluge survives, Grim Heart loses.

Deluge must live.

This was a promise she made to Inferno.

A promise Inferno never heard.

A promise Deluge made after Inferno died.

A promise to the Pure Elements.

Princess Deluge will live on.

Deluge was tired, her feet hurt, but she has to keep moving. She has to survive. She ran as fast as she can, along with the rest.

☆ **Fal**

Deluge had frozen the entrance to the Briefing Room. This was to prevent the Shufflins from coming closer.

With them now on the run, the magic will run out. How long will they have before the glass shatters?

A minute? Will that be enough? The Ace of Spades may be able to completely ruin that chance.

Leading the charge forward was none other than Marika Fukuroi.

“HAHAHA! So we're fighting by running, huh? Alright, I'll play!” she said as she ran across the Water Room.

Whenever she reached the puddles, she splashed hard, with every step, making sure the water reaches her body, face, and anywhere she can feel it.

When Mimi said that Marika needed sunlight, she wasn't kidding.

Marika also needed water and dirt as well to be at her best. Concrete areas with darkness and dryness make Marika weak.

Fal had looked into her, and found out the reason.

Marika is a plant.

Well, she's not actually a plant, but...

...Her biology is that of a plant. In her Magical Girl form, she has plant cells, despite having human features.

Everything about her functions generally like a plant. Despite having human-like organs such as bones, a Magical Girl form can alter your physiology and your mental state.

Some Magical Girls embody their forms, like Magical Girls styled after an animal will take the traits of that animal.

Marika functions like a plant-human hybrid.

Her body gets stronger when surrounded by dirt, given sunlight, and if she consumes water at all.

Even so, Marika's right arm was folded to her chest, and her eye was still swollen.

She hasn't completely healed from the fight with Ace of Spades, and her right arm was still bent and broken.

However, Fal noticed that Marika was healing a bit faster once she drank all that water, so it *does* help a bit.

She ate a seed, and immediately sprouted a flower on her head.

"SUNFLOWER CANNON!"

Marika slammed the door to the hallways, Fal readied his sensors.

"Three enemies, next corner, Pon!"

Marika led the charge, didn't even need to aim, and looked across the corner,

"BOOM!"

She fired the beam of her sunflower cannon, there was nowhere to dodge since the aisle was so thin, the three Spade Shufflin's bodies were pierced and burned.

They died almost instantly.

Marika's sunflower withered, and Marika seemed tired from using all that energy, but she ate another seed, still going forward.

Right now, only Mimi and Snow White were really at full strength. Deluge was a lot less experienced than them, not to mention younger.

Filuru had a serious injury, despite being covered by Mimi's illusion.

Unlike Marika, Filuru couldn't heal herself by sunlight, water, dirt. She had to use the normal way of healing, time or medicine.

And time is something they're running out of.

"No Magical Girls in the aisle, Pon!"

The group ran ahead. Using Fal's detectors should be easy, Fal focused it entirely on the space in front of them.

All he needed was to make sure if any Magical Girls were sighted.

Next, the door to the Desert Area.

Marika was no longer running in water, but she was running in sand. At the very least, perhaps some light could help her.

"Pon! 15 Magical Girls detected, Pon!"

But where were they?

The desert area was completely empty and deserted. There were no signs at all of any Magical Girls within the Desert Area.

Where were the Shufflin? There was little room to hide, even for Clubs.

The girls kept moving ahead. If they can't find anything, the best option is to keep moving forward. After all, time is of the essence, and they can't waste any more of it.

As they crossed the sand dunes, they saw a large group of Shufflin making a defensive blockade past the door.

Now it makes sense.

However...

“HAHAHA! PERFECT!”

Marika got down on all fours, and shot a beam from her sunflower cannon, scattering the Shufflin away, Clubs and Spades.

Snow White and Deluge prepared their weapons, Snow White taking on the left group, while Deluge took on the right.

Mimi quickly pushed the button, opening the door.

Snow White engaged the Shufflins, expertly dodging their attacks, she used their momentum against them, as she let them get sliced by her halberds.

Deluge was more direct, as she aggressively attacked each Shufflin, not letting them fight back at all.

When the door opened, Fal yelled out,

“Four more Magical Girls coming this way, Pon! We need to get inside now, Pon!”

Snow White and Deluge hurried and slid inside, but Marika stayed behind.

“You guys go... I'll handle the rest of them, hehe...”

“There's over 13 of them, Pon!”

“Then I'll be the distraction! With us split, they can't possibly chase you!”

“Marika, you're crazy!” shouted Mimi.

“Mimi, just go!”

Mimi made a disgruntled noise, and retreated to the Desert Area, joining Marika by her side.

“Mimi, what the hell-”

“Shut up and deal with it,” said Mimi, readying her weapons.

“We don't have time, Pon!”

“Close the door and *run*, dammit!” said Marika.

Snow White and Deluge looked at each other, before they both agreed and began to close

the door.

However, completely out of nowhere, a girl popped through mid-air, catching even Fal and Snow White by surprise.

This girl was somehow shiny...

Deluge, however, had a face that was a mix of shock and joy.

“Prism... Cherry...? You’re alive!!!”

“S-Sorry I’m late, Deluge! I’m going to do what I can! I know what’s going on, so I need to hurry!” said Cherry as she ran towards the door.

“Cherry? Cherry, wait what are you doing!?”

“I know what I’m doing, just *run!*”

“CHERRY!”

“This isn’t my story, Deluge. I’ll do my best so you make it out of this,” said Cherry looking back with a smile, as she slid through the closing door.

☆ **Styler Mimi**

A Magical Girl ran next to Mimi and Marika.

Who is this?

“Don’t worry, I’m a friend!” said the strange shiny girl.

“A friend? AWESOME! Let’s kick some ass!” shouted Marika.

How did Marika just accept it? Who was this girl? What was she doing here? Why is she strangely shiny? A friend?

Why was Mimi here again?

There was so many Shufflin. There was 13 of them, Clubs and Spades combined. They would be overwhelmed.

There was no way that the 3 of them could fend off all of that, especially not if the Ace of Spades shows up.

The Magical Girl stranger simply looked at them both.

“COVER YOUR EYES!” she said.

Mimi instinctively did what she was told, and she looked away. She saw that the strange girl suddenly became extremely bright.

Very bright.

As bright as a shining star.

The brightness lit the room completely, and Mimi noticed the Shufflins rushing them covered their eyes completely. Stunned.

This was perfect.

Whatever this shiny girl's doing, the light isn't a fake, nor was it an illusion.

It seems that her power is to manipulate light. Judging from the fact that her dress and outfit are all reflective...

...Did she have the power to change light that's reflected from within reflective surfaces? That explains how she can radiate so brightly.

Marika needed this.

Mimi had to buy time.

"Hey, girl! Point it at her! Full strength!" said Mimi.

The shiny girl nodded, and she aimed her entire body at Marika, radiating with the power of being near a star.

Marika's sunflowers burst open and grew larger...

...larger

...larger

"HAHAHAHA!!!! YEAAAAAH!!!"

The shiny girl shined even brighter and brighter, and Mimi... Mimi had to prevent the Shufflin from reaching her.

A Shufflin rushed the bright girl, Mimi intercepted her with scissors, another, Mimi threw scissors at her feet.

Two Shufflin attacked Mimi. It didn't matter, Marika had to power up.

The Club Shufflin bludgeoned Mimi in the face. Her vision became blurry, but Mimi didn't care. She had to stop the Shufflin advance.

She dual-wielded her scissors and attacked any Shufflin coming for the shiny girl.



She stabbed them, sliced them, dodged them, even if her body was punished. Even if she felt pain, she would endure it.

Finally...

“SOLAR HEAVEN...” said Marika, with a gigantic glowing sunflower on her head.

“...SUNFLOWER **HELL!!!!**”

Marika planted herself on the ground, standing proud, sunflower aimed directly forward.

Mimi rushed to the shiny girl and tackled her down to the sand, since she knew exactly what Marika was about to do.

“Marika Fukuroi! You’re always this insane!” shouted Mimi as she dived to the sand.

“THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT!” shouted Marika, grinning with happiness.

“THAT WASN’T A COMPLIMENT!” shouted Mimi.

“HEY YOU, SUN GIRL, THANKS A BUNCH FOR THIS!” said Marika.

“Ah!? Yeah! Anything to help out!” said the shiny girl.

Both of them had their heads down, and they heard a large burning noise, circling around them as Marika screamed in pleasure.

The beam was larger than almost anything they’ve seen, and Marika tried her best not to hit the two of them as she tried to control and aim her sunflower cannon.

She rotated, burning the entire room in a 360-degree arc.

All it took was a few seconds.

Just a few seconds, and it was over.

Looking up, Mimi saw nothing but dust and smoke, with some sand floating about. The walls of the room were charred black.

On top of the hill, Marika went down on all fours, extremely tired from the energy consumption that happened due to the attack.

The other Magical Girl also stopped shining, and Mimi can finally see her face clearly for the first time.

A beautiful face, radiating and shining with multiple colors.

“You’re gonna have to tell me your name later, okay?” said Mimi with a smile.

“O-Okay... Did I do good?”

“Yeah, you did great. Just in time, too!” said Mimi.

The other girl smiled.

“We should catch up with the Hunter,” said Mimi.

“T-The Hunter?”

“The Magical Girl Hunter. Don’t worry, she’s not scary. She’s actually quite nice, probably, if you get to know her, maybe. A little stubborn though, but I deal with that often,” said Mimi.

The two of them chuckled.

Then they heard a noise in the distance.

The door opened.

Shit.

“Stay down,” said Mimi.

Mimi immediately worked her magic. She made sure everything about this shiny girl looked like sand.

Styler Mimi may be able to change you into looking like other Magical Girls, but she can also make you look like anything too.

Camouflage. The perfect disguise.

She could make you look like sand and nobody would notice. The perfect disguise.

She went over to Marika, she transformed her too. She had to protect these two first. She had a feeling she knew exactly who was coming through that door.

Now that Marika was completely sand, she can focus on herself.

But...

...A blur.

...Pain.

A stab on her throat.

She was too late.

Ah...

The spear was removed.

Blood flowed from behind her.

Blood flowed outside her mouth.

She couldn't breath.

It hurts...

...It hurts...

Every time Marika Fukuroi had a problem, or an issue, she'd come to Mimi. Sometimes she'd come to Mimi to drag her to her journeys.

Mimi always refused, then Marika would drag her.

It's always been the same.

Mimi could always fight back, but she didn't. She and Marika have a... complicated relationship.

Because underneath everything Marika did, Mimi didn't feel like Marika did it out of malice.

Mimi felt like Marika was trying to call out for a friend.

Marika is blunt, but at the same time, she's insecure...

...Marika never invites anyone she truly hates. There's a difference between fighting an opponent because of a good fight, and fighting them because she hates them.

The desert turned bright red.

Mimi could see it.

What will Marika do without Mimi? Will she be okay? Will people understand her?

She can't function in a normal society, with the way she acts, always fighting people, always trying to sneak attack them.

Only Mimi understood that Marika is more than meets the eye.

Marika Fukuroi is an outcast, and she acts that way because no one else would give her a chance.

Pain...

...It hurts...

That's why Mimi always lets herself be dragged around.

Marika just wanted a friend, but wouldn't admit it.

So blunt...

...Yet so indirect.

Mimi saw her attackers.

King of Clubs, Ace of Spades...

The King sneaked past her.

Mimi's strength was failing.

Marika... Stay safe... You insane idiot...

Her strength was running out. Better use it.

She picked up her scissors, and threw it at the throat of the King of Clubs. The King of Clubs wasn't expecting that.

She fell down, scratching her throat and gargling in pain.

Mimi was gargling too... She couldn't breathe, and blood came up to her mouth, as she coughed it out.

She crawled over next to Marika.

Time's up.

Mimi always thought her adventures would end with her going back home, but...

...This time it was different.

This time it was time to rest.

Mimi laid down, looking up at the ceiling.

She let go of life.

☆ **Marika Fukuroi**

Mimi wasn't moving.

Mimi wasn't moving at all.

Mimi's gone.

The Shufflin that killed her didn't die. She still lived... removing the scissors from her throat.

But Mimi.

Mimi was attacked. A fatal injury.

Marika didn't move.

Marika didn't help.

Marika couldn't move.

Marika couldn't help.

She was so stupid...

...Wait, why is she doing this?

Why is she thinking about the dead? Combatants don't do that in a fight. She shouldn't be thinking about the dead...

I took her...

She shouldn't be thinking about the dead...

I caused this...

She should be focused on the fight...

I wanted someone by my side...

Conflicted feelings. This wasn't a warrior thinking, this was weak. This was weak.

Marika's thinking weak thoughts.

I was weak... I couldn't protect her...

Marika and the other Magical Girl held their breath.

The two Shufflins walked towards the door, away from them.

Mimi was besides Marika.

Mimi...

Mimi...

Styler Mimi...

Marika can't think of casualties. The dead isn't fun. Fighting is fun. Marika should be charging at them right now.

But yet, what are these feelings that dyed her mind...

...Sadness.

Sadness shouldn't be a thing.

Longing.

Regret.

Mimi's gone.

She's not coming back.

Mimi's gone... and she's not coming back.

The best warriors didn't have anyone close to them. They weren't tainted by anything like companionship.

That's why Marika was kicked out and disgraced, right?

Because she was always weak to that... Because she always wanted someone she can share things with...

Look at the best fighters...

The Magical Girl Hunter, who shed her friends away, allowing her to become stronger.

Cranberry, who abandoned Mao's School to move on to more things, successful in life.

Mao Pam, who was high up and the best fighter in existence, nobody even came close to calling them companions and friends.

Marika...

Marika Fukuroi wanted to be as good as they are, but being weak to the feeling of companionship... ruined those chances.

Now she can't even move because...

...She was so damn angry!

Mimi's gone...

Marika held her breath.

The Ace of Spades waited by the door, but the Ace of Clubs came back.

Mimi had already turned back into a human, her eyes rested in calmness.

Then the King of Clubs grabbed Mimi's human body, and ripped her apart in two.

No...

How dare you...

Blood splattered across the sand. They must want to make sure that Mimi died... But this... Defacing her body like this...

Marika kept hold. Her breath still.

Melville had trained with Marika on holding still. So much so that Cranberry wouldn't be able to detect them based on sound.

Marika moved quietly, swallowing a seed.

This one's for Mimi.

She waited until the Clubs was vulnerable, and then...

...She rushed up to the Clubs Shufflin, and with all her strength, she punched the King of Clubs so hard that the King flew backwards, disarming her weapon.

But the King wasn't dead.

Marika was tired, but she swung her next punch, which King easily dodged. King then replied with her own punch.

The punch was aimed towards Marika's forehead. It bled as it connected with Marika.

First mistake.

Marika aimed an elbow, and it connected with King's nose, breaking it.

King replied by choking Marika, and punching her in the forehead, repeatedly. Marika felt dizzy, her head was about to give in. She could feel scars and wounds forming.

Marika kneed the King, and choked her as well, punching her repeatedly just as badly. Marika isn't going down that easily.

She saw the Ace of Spades run as fast as possible, with a spear, intending to finish off Marika. She might die in that case.

But then, the Ace was tackled.

The other Magical Girl, tackling the Ace, tangling with her, trying to wrestle the spear away. The girl punched the Ace, but the Ace began overpowering her.

Marika had to be fast...

Marika had to protect her...

The other Magical Girl shone at the Ace, blinding her, but the Ace whacked her away, easily overpowering her.

Meanwhile, the King kneed Marika in the stomach.

Marika grabbed hold of the King's shoulders, and with her strength, she headbutted the King.

Then, Marika heard a scream.

A scream of pain.

Her friend. The other Magical Girl.

She'd been stabbed by the Ace, who twisted the spear deeper and deeper into her body, every twist injecting a harsh scream on the girl.

Marika was too late...

She wanted to protect her, but the girl ended up protecting Marika... just like Mimi...

Marika headbutted the King,

One.

Two.

Three.

The King of Clubs lost balance and fell backwards. Now Marika had to deal with the Ace.

The Ace of Spades sped towards Marika, and Marika launched a punch at the Ace, which Ace of Spades easily blocked.

The Ace of Spades hit Marika in the head with the blunt end of her spear, stunning Marika and blurring her vision.

The Ace then saw her chance.

Quickly, she thrust the Spade spear towards Marika, but Marika managed to intercept it just in time, holding the spear with both hands, as both Magical Girls tried to fight against the other.

Ace wanted to thrust the spear, but Marika was doing her best to prevent that.

Then, the King of Clubs grabbed her in the arms, which gave Ace all the time she needed.

“GRAAGH- Gk! Gak!”

The sound of flesh tearing.

The spear had been thrust into Marika’s chest.

Blood was filling up her neck. Marika was beginning to gag.

Was this what death’s door felt like...?

Then, she felt warmth...

Light...

Light glowing, from... the other Magical Girl.

She was on the ground, dying, but she shone. She shone brightly towards Marika. She kept shining with all her energy.

Marika felt power surge through her. The pain of the spear, her will to live, life vs. death.

If the Ace of Spades wanted to stab her, she may as well commit to it, DAMN IT!!!

Marika grabbed the shaft of the spear, and she pushed the spear further inside of her. The Ace of Spades had a shocked look on her face.

As Marika pushed the spear further, the pain shot up, but Marika moved forward.

King of Clubs desperately holding on behind Marika.

Then, Marika grabbed the Ace of Spades’ shoulders, and she pulled herself towards the Ace.

“KYAAAAAAAGH!!!! HNGGGGGG.... GRAAAAAAAH!”

The spear’s tip tore out from Marika’s back, and the momentum of Marika sliding towards the Ace, with King of Clubs grabbing onto her, meant that...

The King of Clubs was dragged forward, and because of that, the King of Clubs was also stabbed by the spear of the Ace.

The King of Clubs coughed up blood, Marika grinned.

Tears began to flow out of Marika's eyes, as the pain was unbearable, but the light of the sun... The sun was healing her, not only that, the sun made her flower bloom further.

The seed that she ate before...

The flower that's blooming on her head...

...She had just enough energy to say it out loud.

"GENOCIDE... ORCA!!!"

A yellow flower bloomed, but across Marika's body, red and purple thorns visibly popped out. Sharp like a cactus.

She then lunged forward, and hugged the Ace of Spades tightly, every part of her body had thorns protruding.

She felt it as the Ace was brought closer to her.

The Ace's eyeball was crushed.

Her cranium shattered.

Her brain stabbed.

Behind her, the King of Clubs' body fell to Marika's back, dying and lifeless, and Marika squeezed the life out of the Ace of Spades, who tried to move, but Marika wouldn't let her move.

The sunlight began to fade.

The Ace of Spades gagged, spasmed, and fell still.

Marika let go...

She grabbed the spear, and with the last of her strength, she pulled it out of her body.

The sunlight left, and the other Magical Girl closed her eyes, smiling.

Marika couldn't stand. The wound in her chest was heavy, but it's healing. Faster with sunlight.

The two Shufflins lay dead on the ground.

Marika was about to collapse too.

Maybe when she wakes up...

...She'll fight some better battles.

I hope I didn't disappoint you...

Mao Pam

Styler Mimi

She thought of everyone she knew, and couldn't parse through all their faces, before she fell backwards, and lost consciousness.

☆ Fal

Snow White can read the hearts of Cyber Fairies too.

She should know how worried Fal is.

Fal focused on the task ahead. Only a few meters ahead and they should be good.

“Three Magical Girls in the aisle ahead, Pon!”

“Hearts! Fal, you know what to do,” said Snow White.

Fal prepared himself. While Fal could detect the number of Magical Girls, only Snow White could figure out the Shufflin’s type, based on their single-mindedness.

Hearts are characterized by one thing. Their fear.

Snow White threw her Magical Phone across the aisle. Fal increased the stereoscopic image projection, and maximized the volume.

In an instant, he projected a gigantic version of himself, that filled almost the entire hallway.

“BOO!” shouted Fal, with the loudest voice.

The two Heart Shufflin instantly fell down in fear, as Snow White kicked the wall, and catapulted herself by kicking a wall, aiming straight for the 7 of Spades, caught off-guard by Snow’s propelled jump.

Snow White easily whacked the Spades Shufflin, knocking her out, while Deluge froze the Heart Shufflin in place.

Snow White picked up her Magical Phone, not losing a beat. This was how she fought, never letting the enemy even get a chance.

Using people’s fear, using any advantage she can get.

Snow White and Deluge ran as fast as possible.

“No more, Pon! Just ahead is the door!”

“Fal, the password!”

Snow White had relayed to Fal the password before. Snow White only needed to remember it for a while, and Fal could store it completely within his memory.

“2847392869036194836787709!”

The door began opening, with a voice announcing that the password had been accepted.

Deluge breathed a sigh of relief.

This was no time for relief, but Fal understood that Deluge needed a break after what she’s been through.

As the door rose slowly, suddenly, a computer sound pointed out.

“Password changed. Closing.”

Everyone panicked. The door was going down again. It’s not big enough for a Magical

Girl to even fit through.

Snow White thought fast, and used her halberd to hold the door down.

Snow White's halberd, *Ruler*, had the specialty of being completely unbreakable, so it can definitely last against this door.

"Hnggggh!!! Nggh!!!"

Snow White fought against the door, leveraging her hardest to lift it open, but all she could do was keep it from being closed.

The gap was still too small for a normal person, but...

...Snow White looked at Deluge, Snow White was visibly sweating, trying to keep the door up as best as she can.

"Deluge, get in the bag!"

"What?"

"GET IN THE BAG!"

"B-But what about you?"

"You're the important one here, as long as you live, nothing else matters, now GET IN THE BAG!" yelled out Snow White, as her face turned red trying to hold the door open.

Deluge entered the 4-D bag alongside Filuru.

Once Snow White was sure that Deluge was inside the bag, she kicked the bag off to the other side of the door.

And then...

...She let go of the halberd.

Slam!

Now no one's getting out...

Snow White collapsed, her back against the door.

Fal could scan Snow White's vitals. Throughout the entire ordeal, she had shown almost little to no emotion, but...

...Her heart rate is three times faster than usual.

Now it's finally slowing down.

"We did it, Pon."

"Yeah... Yeah, we did..."

"You really have grown, Pon. I think everyone would be proud of you, Pon!" said Fal.

Snow White chuckled,

"No one knows we're here, Fal... But it doesn't matter... As long as Deluge made it out," said Snow White.

“Well, I’m proud of you, Pon! I’ll definitely stay by your side, thick and thin.”

“You sure about that, Fal? I don’t really have a good track record... with close friends, y’know?”

“I don’t care about that, Pon! In the end, you really are a Magical Girl, Pon! It’s my job as a mascot and as a friend to make sure you stick to that, Pon!”

“Heh... Optimistic to the end, huh? You’re a good friend, Fal...”

“Forever till the end, Pon!”

“Fal...”

“Pon?”

“I’m gonna... pass out for a while, okay? I don’t know if the Joker will come, or if the Ace of Spades or... but, thanks... for being there for me,” said Snow White.

“I’ll be there for you till the end of days, Pon!” said Fal.

Snow White chuckled again, then slowly, her face went silent, as she passed out at last from her tiredness.

☆ **Filuru**

Deluge had carried Filuru up the stairs.

“Could you put me down a bit,” said Filuru.

“You okay?” asked Deluge.

“Yeah, yeah I’m getting better, ehehe...”

They arrived back at the warehouse. The damp, wet, dark warehouse. Such nostalgic memories here.

Now they’re outside.

Now they can call for help.

Everything’s not over. Filuru can resume her life again, and Deluge can be safe too. Filuru just needs to contact some people to ensure Deluge’s safety.

She sent a text message to her contacts in the Land of Magic, asking to be picked up in S-City at the exact location.

Deluge was calmer too, though Filuru could tell that Deluge has been through a lot.

All of her friends died there, and most of them were injured. Filuru didn’t even know if everyone down there would survive.

Filuru hasn’t even changed back into her old clothes, she still had it switched with Snow White.

Filuru couldn’t believe that just a few hours ago, perhaps, she had agreed to split the pay in three for finding Deluge and her friends.

Now she’s actually helping Deluge to escape and survive.

Kafuria and Uttakatta.

Filuru only met them for a few hours at best, but they were one of the closest friends Filuru ever had since her job.

Maybe she doesn't even need a job.

She could just be a Freelancer.

Her normal warden job was lonely. There was honestly nobody there while she waited for something interesting to happen.

Maybe it was for the best that she was thrust into this Freelancer life.

Whatever happens, Filuru will make the best of it. She knows that Uttakatta and Kafuria did the same with their lives.

"Come on, let's go."

"Okay."

The two of them walked out to the exit, but as they started their journey.

Clang

They heard a noise from the bathroom.

The two of them looked back, but they saw no one there.

Was it an illusion?

Wary, the two still continued onwards, keeping their guard up just in case anything happened.

It was then that the two realized who was trying to block their path.

Just in front of them was a lone Shufflin.

Her suit

Hearts.

Filuru sighed with relief.

Hearts Shufflin didn't have any abilities to fight. For the most part, Heart Shufflin tended to run around scared with fear.

For the longest time, they had to fight Shufflin as their enemy.

Yet, Filuru remembered when she first got here, and they met Shufflin as a friend.

Filuru even tried to comfort a Heart Shufflin when she was crying, drying up her tears away. Now, however, everything's changed.

"We're not here for trouble. Just stand aside, and we'll be on our way."

The Heart Shufflin didn't move.

She only stared at them.

Her stare wasn't even that of fear, it had a malicious look to it. Something's not right.

Deluge took out her trident, and she threw it straight to the Heart Shufflin, stabbing her in the chest.

It was then that everything made sense.

The robe that the Heart Shufflin wore was torn, and the Heart Shufflin ripped it off, revealing another robe underneath.

Spades.

She was never a Hearts Shufflin.

The Spades Shufflin equipped her spear, and with speed, she threw it straight at Deluge. Deluge had no weapons to block, and she was still reeling from the fact that the Spade Shufflin revealed herself.

Filuru pushed Deluge away, but Filuru was tired.

Filuru couldn't move away herself...

The sound of flesh tearing skin.

Pain.

The spear had pierced Filuru in her chest.

Blood dripped down Snow White's uniform. A pure schoolgirl uniform, tainted red with blood. Filuru looked down at her body.

Deluge screamed in anger and sadness.

Filuru began to lose her sight, as she fell down.

Was this the end?

Did she do her best?

Was she useful?

Deluge was safe... she hoped.

She could only hear the sounds of an angered girl, beating up on another girl, stabbing sounds of a trident.

Deluge screamed in rage.

Please, be safe...

☆ Shufflin

Grim Heart was too angry to speak.

She had released her rage on the room, destroying the monitors, destroying the equipment, destroying almost everything.

Not something a noble would do.

But Grim Heart had a right to be angry.

Both Grim Heart and Shufflin had failed in their mission. The Magical Girls have escaped,

and there were witnesses.

Nothing is stopping anyone from finding out now.

The secret's out, the Experimental Body will be found. An investigation will probably be conducted, and more research will go into this.

That just means they have to be more careful next time.

It also means that they can't slack off for the next round. When the storm comes, Shufflin will sure be ready.

But how did this happen?

Shufflin was a powerful Magical Girl.

Grim Heart was the most powerful Magical Girl.

Did they underestimate their foes? Did they misjudge what barbarians were capable of doing? Were they tricked?

They'd assumed that they would attack them, but they found a way to escape instead.

Looking back, they had a lack of information.

They have yet to figure out the Hunter's power, nor did they figure out what the power of Styler Mimi was, and their strategies only developed at the very end.

Mistakes that cost them their mission.

Grim Heart stood up, and a group of Shufflin followed close behind.

She walked towards the exit of the Briefing Room.

Joker looked towards her army. This time, they'll have to do better. Killing off the remaining Magical Girls will do no profit.

For now, Joker will follow Grim Heart, and see where this leads.

Yes, let's see where this will lead to.

EPILOGUE

☆ 7753

Human Resources, 7753.

Paperwork level high, actual work level low.

Ever since the attack on Pfle's house, the Human Resources Division has had a slow work week. Meaning less paperwork that's due.

Most of the Division is trying to see if they're safe enough to continue working again, and it doesn't help that the Examination Division is closely monitoring almost everything there.

Still, that means more time to relax, and more time to spend some bonding with family.

7753 brewed some coffee, and she headed towards the living room.

There, her guests were eagerly waiting while watching a movie.

Mana, and Tepsekemei.

Mana had fully recovered, and was on her feet again. Actually, since the Examination Division would like to investigate almost every potential member of the Human Resources Division, Mana volunteered to be 7753's supervisor.

Mana knew 7753 personally, so it was easier for her to talk with 7753, and 7753 felt a bit more calm with Mana watching her house instead of some other Examination Division Magical Girl.

"Coffee?" asked 7753 as she came in with a tray.

"Thanks," said Mana with a smile.

The three of them sat down and watched the movie, eating snacks and drinking coffee.

It was a crime drama movie. Typical action movie where the hero saves the day, gets the girl, and probably with some bits and pieces thrown in.

For some reason, Mana really liked those kinds of movies.

It wasn't really anything groundbreaking, but Tepsekemei watched intently.

She studied almost every word that the characters were saying, mouthing it everytime. Tepsekemei had mostly learnt how to emote from TV shows.

She learned new words from there, and she learned how to express herself from there.

After the movie was done, Mana left for the kitchen to wash her hands, while 7753 began cleaning up the table.

With Mana gone, 7753 could be more at ease with expressing herself.

She was worried.

Worried for the future.

Worried for Tepsekemei.

Worried for what will happen to the trio.

But she didn't want to show that worry to Mana, because showing that worry would mean Mana would probe further.

Mana didn't deserve that after losing her sister.

Tepsekemei she could be more open to. Tepsekemei might not understand the subtleties of 7753 being worried, since Mei was very straightforward about everything.

But it looks like 7753 may have underestimated Mei's empathy.

Tepsekemei grabbed 7753's shoulders, and with the most serious expression she could muster up.

"7753. You need to be more firm. You need to be more confident."

"Huh? What's all this?" said 7753 chuckling.

"Mei will always be by your side. You need to be confident in what you do," said Tepsekemei.

7753 had no idea if Tepsekemei was being serious or if she was practicing a line from the movie where the supporting character backs up the main character.

Either way, 7753 knew that Tepsekemei was serious about one thing.

Her intent.

Then they heard a snort and some laughter from behind them.

Mana had been watching the whole thing.

"How long were you there?"

"Pfft, long enough, haha! Sorry, sorry! Hey, Mei. You said you wanted to show me your garden, right?"

"Mei made a secret base."

"Ohh, that's cool. Show me!"

Tepsekemei rushed out. 7753 could tell that Tepsekemei was happy.

She spent all week making a nest from her garden, where she would probably hide out in the day, playing in the tunnels underground, or just around the garden.

Tepsekemei had also learned how to plant trees. She studied it in one of her days and took interest in that.

"You guys have fun out there, I'm gonna do the dishes a bit, okay?"

"7753 will come outside after?" asked Tepsekemei.

"Don't worry Mei. Go show Mana your stuff!" said 7753.

Tepsekemei nodded, and dragged Mana outside.

7753 saw from the window that Tepsekemei and Mana were having a good time. She turned on the faucet, and picked up a sponge, and began cleaning the cup.

“Like this?” she heard Mana say from outside, planting a tree, with some dirt on her face.

Tepsekemei nodded, Mana followed her instructions carefully. Tepsekemei then showed Mana the various holes and tunnels that Tepsekemei created.

Mana was treating Tepsekemei like her little sister. Mana hadn’t smiled or laughed since Hana died, so it’s great that she could move on.

Tepsekemei also got a supportive friend, and was able to learn more social interactions. She’s getting better at emoting, and getting better at expressing herself.

Training with Mana would be the best course of action for Tepsekemei.

7753, meanwhile, had her own problems.

She scanned the sponge.

Apparently it was imported from Germany. Huh, the more you know.

7753 would scan things sometimes, to keep her mind off bigger things at hand. Knowing short little details made her mind wander.

She still couldn’t scan herself, since she can’t exactly see herself, and mirrors don’t work, as she’ll only scan the mirror instead.

Her boss, Pfle, had been under house arrest.

If the Examination Division figures out that Pfle sent her to work with Pythie Frederica, who knows what will happen.

Not even 7753 knew the extent of what the teamwork with Frederica implied. It’s not the first time she’s teamed up with her, but she hated every second of it.

Be more firm.

Maybe she should.

She had a family now. She had the closest thing she had to a close circle of friends. Mana and Tepsekemei were the closest things she had as family.

She still wanted to know what happened in B-City, especially the parts that she wasn’t involved in.

She wanted to know where Ripple was, why her body was never found.

For that, Pfle needed to cooperate, as she was certain that she knew more than she let out on.

S-City was different. 7753 was never part of that incident, but something similar must have happened.

She had heard reports that two Magical Girls had been arrested, but during their transfer to the Land of Magic prison, an accident hit the transport.

The accident was so huge that no bodies were found, and it was assumed that all involved had died.

Died? Really? 7753 wasn't sure of that.

Magical Girls don't die in accidents.

Then again...

...The train crash inside B-City killed a close friend of 7753. The Namiyama High School girls were family.

7753 would always remember them. She didn't spend a lot of time with them, but they were heroes nonetheless.

And 7753 will carry on their memory until the day she dies.

Which reminded her of something.

She had a guest upstairs. She arrived last week, and was picked up by the Land of Magic after a distress call was sent to S-City.

7753 brewed a cup of coffee and went upstairs.

There, she saw her, sitting, emotionless, staring off into the distance, not at anything in particular, either.

She's been like this ever since she arrived last week.

An empty shell of a girl.

Princess Deluge.

She'd lost all her friends too, and she hasn't been taking it well. Normally, a Magical Girl's mental state can always handle heavy losses due to their increased stability, but Deluge wasn't exactly a normal Magical Girl.

Man-Made Magical Girl. 7753 had no idea what that even meant.

Mana had even tried a spell to calm her down. She still reacted the same way.

Eating, bathing, sleeping. That was all that Deluge did in 7753's house, and everytime she did it, there wasn't exactly any emotion either.

The scary part is that if Deluge had moved on, and her mind is no longer reeling from shock, that means that Deluge is acting completely rationally.

7753 sat next to Deluge, offering her coffee.

"So, I heard you met Snow White. She's kind of like you, y'know? She became a Magical Girl when she was in middle school too!" said 7753 with a smile.

No response.

"Do you know that her halberd has a name? It's Ruler. I think it's someone from her selection tests. Did you name your weapon?" asked 7753.

No response.

"Y'know, even though you're all quiet, you still manage to keep yourself in shape. That's a good thing," said 7753.

No response.

Deluge's eyes were unreadable. Scanning her revealed that she was perfectly fine. That's always what scared 7753.

What is going on in this girl's head?

"Well, if you need me, just call, okay?"

No response.

7753 placed a coffee cup on the table, took a deep breath, and walked downstairs.

☆ **Shadow Gale**

Mamori Totoyama was reading the newspapers.

Really, all she could read are newspapers.

Seven newspapers come every day to the Hitokouji Manor. Each newspaper covers and focuses on different things usually.

Some were sports focused, some were gossip, some were actual world news.

Sometimes newspapers would cover the same story, but from two different perspectives. Mamori always found that interesting.

Mamori never really read much of the news. There was only one reason why she's reading so much news these past few days.

Because the Hitokouji Manor was under strict supervision.

Ever since Kanoe was attacked, there had been a slew of Magical Girls that were sent to guard the manor.

Their reasons were for protection.

'protection'.

Sure, if protection was the same way a prison guard protected a prisoner.

This was clearly a house arrest. They weren't acting like bodyguards at all, they were acting like prison guards.

Electronics were confiscated, they cut off access to the internet, Mamori couldn't even play any video games.

Not even tablets used to read books were allowed.

They're basically living in a place without access to technology, so now Mamori relies on physical entertainment.

Physical books, newspapers, things like that.

Mamori opened the curtains, and she saw a teenaged-looking girl, folding her arms, standing in guard.

She was wearing a suit. She looked like a high school girl preparing for a job interview. Though, that's clearly a Magical Girl.

She had a metal tiara on her head, and her suit was more on the fancy side too, so it's a Magical Girl.

The suit girl glanced at Mamori, and Mamori gave a disgusted glance back, then she proceeded to close the window.

In response, she heard the suit girl's footsteps, as she stopped by the entrance to the door. Great, she went closer.

Mamori disliked all these Magical Girls surrounding the manor. There was about 12 or 13 of them guarding the area, and Mamori didn't have any privacy at all.

Kanoe was hiding something for sure.

Mamori didn't know exactly what was going on, but it's clear that Kanoe herself had done something bad.

Something really really bad.

Knock Knock

"Come in," said Mamori.

Kanoe came in with a slew of board games.

"I thought you might be a bit bored, so I brought some entertainment," said Kanoe with a smile.

"Board games?"

"Board games, card games, the whole bunch."

"You'll just win, my Lady. I'm not good at these games."

"I picked the ones where you know the rules to already, at least."

"And how would you know that? You stalking me?"

"You and I both know each other inside-out Mamori."

"True enough. Still, I don't know how far you've practiced in these games."

"Well, efforts should be invisible. Results should be the only thing visible, after all."

"Isn't that your entire philosophy?"

"Hmhm, well then, shall we? Cards?"

"I don't like cards."

"No? Why not?"

"Too much luck involved. You either get good hands or bad ones."

"Then, Shogi? Chess? Open information. Everyone starts on equal footing."

"You'll still win for sure."

"Adaptation is key to winning, Mamori. I don't expect every plan to go smoothly."

"And Chess and Shogi are things that you'll clearly understand better than I do."

“So, Reversi?”

“Only if I move first.”

“Very well. Advantage goes to you, Mamori. I’ll warn you that advantage doesn’t mean anything if your opponent can adapt to your strategy.”

“I’m playing this expecting to lose, my Lady.”

“Now that’s not a good spirit at all.”

The board was set, the pieces were in place.

Mamori made the first move with the white piece. Kanoe made the second. Mamori made the third.

“Good opener, Mamori. A little by-the-book though.”

“I told you, I’m not exactly good at these games.”

“Maybe when this ban is lifted then.”

“You seem to be taking it quite well. You know you’re not allowed to leave the manor at all, right?”

“That’s perfectly fine, Mamori.”

“I still have school, so I’m going to have to part ways.”

“Would you like an escort?”

“After what we’re getting here, no thank you.”

Kanoe placed a stone, Mamori’s pieces turned black. Mamori shrugged.

“What do you think about the Magical Girls here.”

“Annoying. No privacy. There’s nothing really that we can do about it either. Feels like we’re being imprisoned.”

“No matter, they can’t exactly get anything out from us, nor can they hurt us.”

“Why exactly would they want to do that?”

“Because they will probe, of course.”

“My Lady, I want you to understand this, but... if I find out that something is off, and that you’re doing something very wrong...”

“Hm?”

“...I’m going to have to do something a lot more than hit you with a wrench.”

“That’s a scary thought.”

“A lot more.”

“I hope it doesn’t come to that, then.”

“I hope too. Just... don’t get carried away, please.”

☆ Snow White

There were no signs that it would rain, but it rained.

Snow White walked in the rain anyways. She didn't really have to clean her outfit. It'll just be back again if she ever detransformed.

Still, your clothes and underwear being wet is uncomfortable, but it doesn't matter.

Snow White placed her halberd down on the ground, and sat in the grass. Oh yeah, wet grass, uncomfortable as well.

Again, it didn't matter.

When Snow White received the message to investigate S-City, she had received it from Ripple's phone.

Was Ripple alive?

This search will probably end with nothing at the end. Optimism is good, but it can only get you so much.

Snow White should really stop involving close people with her.

They never end up with good fates anyways.

It's like being around her causes them to die. All because she was unable to protect herself. Times have changed though.

Now Snow White needed no one to protect her. She was perfectly capable of protecting herself.

It's good for her.

It's good for others.

It's a good deal.

They don't have to end up like Snow White's old friends.

The soccer boy that promised that he'd be her sword.

The girl who lost her key, who cared about Snow White more than her life.

It hurts to remember them, but sometimes they float back into her memory. No matter how hard she tried to move on.

Why didn't she die?

Joker and Grim Heart were still alive, but for some reason, she woke back at a hospital, got out, and was perfectly fine.

What happened after all that?

Snow White was completely ready to die as well. Still, she's alive. Means that it's back to business with her.

Find Ripple, hunt rogue Magical Girls.

Her Magical Phone rang. A text message.

If you want to know about the incident in S-City. I have information.

The name you're looking for is Pfle of the Human Resources Division.

If you want more information, come to the meeting spot. The attached file has a map. Come on time.

Snow White took a deep breath.

"You're going, Pon?"

"The meeting point is at a High School. I'll come prepared."

"I'm right with you, Pon."

The sender accused Pfle. Snow White only knew her by name, and only knew her as a high-ranking member of the Human Resources Division.

Will Pfle be her next prey?

Before she even thought of it, she'll need more information. She needs to understand everything beforehand.

Snow White still hasn't gotten over the incident however.

There were so many things that she knew, because she can hear everyone's thoughts, their fears.

Snow White knew that Shufflin could kill hostages to replenish herself. Shufflin didn't want anyone to know this, so Snow White picked up on it.

But Snow White didn't tell anyone.

Because she also heard Deluge and Inferno's minds.

They wanted Tempest to be safe. If Snow White had told them that Tempest died, Deluge and Inferno might become suicidal.

They were young, new Magical Girls, who wanted their friend safe. They had a close friend in each other, and nobody is prepared for when a close friend dies.

Snow White should know, as she herself had been stupid and reckless when that boy and that girl died.

It never gets easy, but every bit of hope matters.

So Snow White chose not to tell them, even though it's disadvantageous. She chose not to tell them how Shufflin replenishes herself, because...

...it will give them hope.

Hope is the one thing you can hold on to in a dark time like that. To prevent anyone else from suffering the same emptiness that Snow White did, she kept that hope alive in Deluge and Inferno.

It couldn't last, but she tried to keep that torch alive as much as she could.

"What's wrong, Pon?"

It's amazing how Fal can sense Snow White's emotions, despite not having any powers of

his own.

“Nothing.”

“It’s always ‘nothing’ with you, Pon”

“Because it really is nothing, Fal.”

“Well... if it’s nothing, then there’s gotta be something to get your mind going, right?”

Fal was cheerful. Optimistic. Fal reminded Snow White of herself.

Fal’s heart was happy, the only thing he was worried about was Snow White and her mental state.

He cared for her.

Cyber Fairies have emotions and feelings, despite what people tend to believe. It’s not all program and data.

Fal was a close friend to Snow White. Sometimes, Snow would close herself off from him, if only to protect him.

But at the same time, she’s glad that Fal is there to brighten up Snow’s day.

Ripple is a strong Magical Girl. Snow was sure she’s alive somewhere. Despite being realistic, it couldn’t hurt to be optimistic as well.

Then Snow White heard a cry for help. The voice of someone’s heart.

“Someone’s in trouble.”

“Well, Magical Girl Hunter, you ready?”

“Always,” said Snow White smiling.

She readied her halberd and left for the source of the sound.

☆ **Shadow Gale**

Kanoe Hitokouji was always by Mamori’s side. When they go to school, when they’re at home. They both knew where each other are.

Even if Mamori fled out alone, Kanoe would know that she left, so in a sense, if Mamori wanted to do something in secret, Kanoe would know simply because Mamori made an effort to avoid Kanoe.

Thanks to the... unique situation that they’re in, this is the first time Mamori was actually forced to be away from Kanoe, and Kanoe wouldn’t think it’s suspicious at all.

That means Mamori had to be quick.

She transformed and went to the roof of the school.

She waited and waited, looking at the nearby clock to find out what time it was.

Finally, she arrived.

“So you’re the sender?” said the girl.

“Yes. M-My name’s Shadow Gale.”

“Snow White.”

“Long time no see, Pon!”

A voice popped out, with a stereoscopic mascot jumping out and about.

This Cyber Fairy was always around when Shadow Gale was in a killing game. It was very uneasy for her, though she knew that not all Cyber Fairies are the same.

This one was Fal, who helped them in the game she was in.

Snow White was the Magical Girl Hunter, who apparently stopped the game’s mastermind, Keek, a few years ago.

“How have you been, Fal?”

“As good as I can be. You?”

“I’m okay.”

Shadow Gale trembled.

Her arms were shivering. Not because the building was cold. Magical Girls are resistant to normal weather effects.

Her body was shaking because of Snow White’s eyes.

It’s like she’s watching her every move.

Was this what managed to stop Keek?

They didn’t call her the Magical Girl Hunter for nothing. It’s as if Shadow Gale’s being watched, and any wrong move will be deadly.

She stepped forward.

She offered a small shining blue ball. It looked a bit like gum, but it’s too bright to be normal candy.

“Here. A sign of trust, and a promise,” said Shadow Gale.

Snow White took the ball silently.

“What’s this?”

“It’s... It’s everything.”

Snow White looked at the ball, and back at Shadow Gale.

“All of Pfl’s plans. Her memories, her motives. Everything. *Everything* is in that small orb that you hold. I have control of it, she entrusted it to me, so now I’m entrusting it to you.”

“What do you hope to accomplish from this?” asked Snow White.

“Without it, she won’t know what to do. With it, you’ll know everything she planned to do. She might be able to be stopped.”

“But she wasn’t forced to do these things? She wasn’t controlled? Then why do you think

removing her memories would help? If her nature is the same, she'll do the same thing again."

She's right.

Pfle would do it again.

It's in her nature.

Mamori's name was made to protect Kanoe.

This was her form of protection. Protecting Kanoe from herself. Stopping Pfle from going further and further.

Shadow Gale took a deep breath.

"...Then you kill me."

Fal's image distorted.

Snow White raised her eyebrow.

"If I die, everything Pfle does will be for nothing. I'm the reason she does things for..."

The 98 Magical Girls.

"...Everything she does is to ensure my safety, I know because I'd be in her position too..."

The fight with Clantail in the VR game.

"...So if I die, Pfle will stop, and she can see. She needs to see the damage she's doing. If she can't see it for herself, then she has to be forced to see."

"You know I can't just kill you."

"Don't you get it, I'm a killswitch! If killing me makes her realize what she's doing. If killing me makes her stop... If killing me can put her back to her senses... Then killing me is worth it."

Pfle is capable of amazing things, but she has extreme tunnel vision.

If Pfle could even stop for a moment, and see what she's doing, then Shadow Gale was certain that Pfle would've gone differently.

Now, however, it's come to this.

The two Magical Girls understood each other.

The White Magical Girl.

The Black Nurse.

Black and White, standing on the roof, bowing down, going their separate ways.

☆ **Pythie Frederica**

Pythie doesn't collect the hair of dead Magical Girls.

It serves no use for her. She even got rid of Cranberry's hair when she died. She can't

exactly see the Magical Girls anymore.

Though, she does make exceptions.

Like the hair of that one girl, Prism Cherry.

Hair could tell you a person's life story. Prism Cherry had the most beautiful hair, but no life story to attach it to.

She was a blank canvas, just like how her hair has multiple ways to view her, shining differently depending on the light source and angle.

She was a blank canvas that Pythie would fill.

She helped out Prism Cherry when she was attacked by Joker, pulling her inside when she was in danger.

She nursed her to health, easy enough to do with the same medicine that she used to heal Ripple.

Then, she taught her the basics of her Magical Skill.

Changing the images in mirrors, why that's merely a way of saying she changes light. She just needed the right nudge, the right push.

She wanted to save her friends. She had a heroic spirit. She wanted to go back.

There were better ways to save them, Pythie could honestly just pull them all here, however, that would be too suspicious, and Snow White would probably notice.

So Pythie allowed Cherry to go back.

She saw Cherry's story unfold. A hero to the very end. Sadly, not strong enough to survive, but her heart was pure.

And now she's gone, but her hair lives on, as her legend and story continues in the heart of Pythie Frederica.

Ah, but then of course there's the Ideal Magical Girl herself, Snow White.

How she has grown.

Pythie had once again seen her, as she has become different than before. She's grown herself, without Pythie's guidance, but still growing into the Ideal Magical Girl.

Pythie actually had plans for Snow White to face off against Pfle.

To use Pfle as food for Snow White's growth. What a climactic battle that would be. However, her plans were ruined when Shadow Gale went ahead and gave Snow White something that could hamper Pfle's plans.

Pfle entrusted Shadow Gale with those things, but did Pfle really not anticipate Shadow Gale to betray her?

Either she does, or she put too much trust in her so called servant.

The door opened, a one-armed ninja was at the doorway, smiling.

Ripple had recovered and was back in her ninja outfit.

“Ah, good as new!”

“You like it?”

“Your original costume suits you, though I will miss dear Stuntchica.”

“What happened?”

Ah yes, Pythie erased all memories of Stuntchica from Ripple, to be safe.

“Just a costume change, and of course, I lent my left hand as well. We were both busy during that time. We created the perfect show! A Magical Girl show for everyone!”

“Oooh, sounds fun!”

“It should be, you had so much fun prancing about! Clowns shouldn’t be sad, after all. But you, my dear Ripple, are the best at being you.”

“Did I do a good job?”

“You did an *amazing* job. Now, you’re going to do some more amazing things, okay?”

“Okay, whatever you say!” said Ripple with a grin.

This isn’t the end yet. With things developing like this, the Land of Magic is about to feel the fallout from the events of S-City.

Sides are being drawn, and people are switching factions left and right.

For this, Pythie really needs to be prepared for the next step.



Quake is certainly
good at sketching.

I kinda think I want
Quake to teach me how
to draw a Magical Girl.

I'm going to become
good enough so that I
don't lose to Quake~

Thank you very much !!

Zut.